Christ praying in ye Garden. Luke

And there appeared an Angel. &c. v. 43. And when he rose up from Prayer, and was come to His Disciples He found them sleeping &c. v. 45. And said unto them &c. v. 46.

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Mid-night THOUGHTS.

Writ, as some think, by a

London-Whigg,

OR, A

Westminster-Tory.

Others think by a

QUAKER,

OR, A

JESUIT:

But call him what they please, they may find him a true

PENITENT

Of the

Church of CHRIST.

London, Printed for *Benj. Clark*, Bookseller, in *George-Yard* in *Lombard-street*, 1682.

THE Constant Meditations of a Man who for many years built on Sand, which every blast of cross Fortune has defaced. But now he has laid new Foundations on the Rock of his Salvation, which no Storms can shake; and will out-last the Conflagration of the World, when time shall melt into Eternity.

TO THE READER.

YOU are to know, that the Author (being no Scholar) had no design to teach others, nor other Aim by writing these his Mid-night Thoughts, then by reviewing them, to keep up his own heart to Heaven: But by this practice, he grew to such a habit of Nightly Meditations, (at his first waking) as prov'd more pleasant then sleep, and in a short time became more delightful, then any other Thoughts could entertain his mind with: So that without any intent to publish them, they swell'd into this bulk you see; and brought him such consolation, that he thought it Gods Mercy to bring him this way to Heaven. And if any Reader do find the like advantage by doing the like, he will have as much cause to thank God as the Author has, who set his fancy on work this way, to defend his heart from indulging such vain Thoughts, as day and night did formerly invade and seduce him unto evil purposes.

And on this account, the Author was perſwaded by ſome Friends, to tranſcribe theſe looſe Papers as they were firſt writ, and tacked together, without any method of coherence obſerved, (as appears by the frequent repetitions of the ſame expreſſions in many of them;) yet they wiſh'd him to keep them as they were, to ſhew how ſuch unlearned men as himſelf, might better imploy their buſie fancies at all times, on the ſerious thoughts of their Eternity, then to drop into their Graves, without any conſideration whither they are going. And the Author on the ſame account, was ſome time after by the ſame Friends, (againſt his own Judgment) over-ruled and perſwaded to permit them to be Printed, (without his Name) who gave him ſuch Arguments for it, as he could not reſiſt, hoping that amongſt ſo much ſincere natural Devotion, ſomething of great uſe may be found to enrich the Souls of thoſe, who are of no more capacity then himſelf, who knew no true felicity, until he learnt to meditate on his Eternity, which every man has ſome Talents to practice on.

Mid-

Mid-night
THOUGHTS.

I.

MOst men do miss of the Felicity they seek on Earth, because the Wealth and Honours that we gain, and all our joys in them, are with our selves still perishing in the height of our Fruitions; and in a little time must all return unto the dust we came from: Yet nothing does disturb the heart of man so often, and so much, as pampering of it with hopes of what we seldom reach, and always over-valuing what we aim at, which our Fancies like Magnifying Glasses represent unto us, with such multiplied Felicities, as dazle our understanding, and captivate our reason with an expectation of what we never find. But such men as can set their hearts on God, (above all his creatures) and delight in him, and his Celestial joyes, will find a constant Felicity here, by an inward assurance of Eternal Glory here-

after; for such a man can never want arguments to encrease his joys on earth, when his repeated sorrows for past sins do create new joys for those sorrows; and every new victory over a new temptation does afford him fresh joys for such frequent conquests over Satan and himself. So that if we can set our whole hearts sincerely to delight in God, and his service, *We may have so many tasts of his Heavenly joys here, and such frequent glimpses of that glory,* that we cannot hide our comforts in the Holy Ghost from our own hearts while we live, and when we die, our Souls will rejoyce to fly into Christs arms, for the consummation of all our hopes, all our joys unto Eternity. And whoever doth observe, will find that the deepest sorrows for sin, does raise the highest joys for our reconciliation, and will prove our fullest happiness on earth.

II.

THe more we search into the ways of Devotion, the clearer we shall see, and experimentally find, that true Divine Philosophy, when fixed in the heart of a Divine Lover, is the highest extract of all the

the blessedness that mans nature is capable of in this world: For God may be said to delight *in filling those Souls with his Celestial joys*, that study him, and will bring a regenerate man to such a sense, and contempt of his past life, that he shall soon arrive at so great a degree of Felicity in his approaches, and converse with him in Holy Meditations, as to lament when he thinks of what joys he has lost, by wandring so long from God. For the felicity to love God, and to be beloved of God, is a pleasant Meditation to entertain a pious mans heart his whole life; *and will invite him to spend more time with God, then with all his creatures.*

III.

WE should always pray with such intention of Spirit in that great duty unto God, and with such fervent zeal, as if our Souls were that moment to expire, and to carry our Pardon with us to Heaven. And every time that we receive the Holy Sacrament, we should consider, that we are climbing a step nearer to Heaven then we were before, so to shew our desires to be there. And whoever will

have patience to read these plain Lessons, and mind them so seriously as to practice them sincerely, will find more pleasure therein, then he can fancy before he tries, (if he never tried to Meditate till now,) because a firm, fixed, ratified Devotion, has in all Ages been experimentally approved of, for the highest delightful diversion, that the heart of man can enjoy.

IV.

DElight in the Lord, and he will give thee thy hearts desire; that thou maist still increase that delight more and more in his mercies and blessings, in his love; and thy trust therein, with a comfortable peace of Conscience, until he brings thee unto the supream delight of all delights, to see his face in Glory; and until then, to entertain thy heart with the joyful assurance of that Felicity to come, as the highest desire a man can have, by continual improving thy delight in God; for from him who is the Fountain of Mercy, and Grace, continual joys do flow.

We

V.

WE are to seek earnestly, and to pray daily for Christs righteousness as our chief treasure, and not to rest until our hearts be inriched with some portion thereof, to carry us to heaven, and in our way thither, so to arm us here, that no approaching evils may divert us. We are also to consider, that the Gospel does not invite us to forsake the pleasures of this World, to go into a Dungeon, (which were a hard lesson) but to remove from hence to inhabit Heaven, with all its glory to Eternity; yet this natural cowardly disease of fearing to die, being born with us, is without cure, *until the Holy Ghost do fall so on us, and dwell so in us*, as to overcome our frailty by his grace, and to make us see, and understand how to value our Interest in Heaven on Christs account; and by that faith, to raise in us such holy courage, as to pass through the Graye with joy to our Eternal Bliss; which requires a Divine valour, beyond the reach of a Natural mans fancy, with assistance from above.

VI.

MOst men do forget that our greateſt affair on Earth, is to ſerve God frequently, diligently, and *publickly to own him*; in the firſt place to ſecure our bleſſed Eternity by his favour, while we have time to do it: And in the ſecond place, to follow our Callings for a Subſiſtance, by his providence proſpering our labour during our abode here: But we do often invert this, by doing quite contrary all our Lives; by hungring and thirſting after periſhing Goods, *and ſerving God at ſpare times only*, as our leaſt concern; until the Agonies of a Death-bed ſhews our miſtake too late. For it is a great preſumption to neglect God all our days, and expect a Crown of Glory at our laſt gaſp, as a reward for our neglect; it is dangerous to provoke God ſo.

VII.

IF we did ſet our hearts to take pleaſure in Piety, as we do to improve our delight in other things, we ſhould find that Heaven Gates would fly open to our ſin-

cere

cere addreſſes, *and perceived the Spirit working in our hearts*, with Divine tranſports full of unexpreſſible joys, while that Sacred flame burns bright within us; *ſuch Emanations from the Holy Ghoſt*, are the greateſt invitations we can have, to encourage us to prepare for a place in Heaven, and to make us eſteem thoſe Celeſtial joys, above all the glories of this world where the greateſt Princes terminate their higheſt ambition to die the Sons of God, (or ſhould do ſo.)

VIII.

WHat God hath revealed to us at Mid-night alone, ſhall be our portions in the next World: And if we can repeat the ſame Communication with joy in the day-time, which we had with Chriſt in the night, we may entertain a comfortable aſſurance that the Holy Ghoſt was at firſt, and is at laſt enkindling thoſe Divine flames within us, to raiſe our elevated tranſported Souls to Heaven.

IX.

THe greatest Epicure cannot have so much pleasure in satisfying all his Appetites, as a regenerate man has *in his conversation with God*, during his devout Addresses, in which he finds the *Holy Ghost raising up his heart* to an assurance of his favour with God, and giving his Soul a delight far above all Carnal fruitions, by the *very victory* over them. But this is only intelligible by Pious hearts, and requires a Divine Valour to encounter, and overcome in such skirmishes with Satan, and to relish the Felicity and Glory of such triumphant joys as follow every such victory.

X.

IF we consider that God asks nothing of man for all his benefits bestowed *(but the heart of man)* and that nothing but man can give the heart to God, and that we ever heard, nor read of any man, that ever made, that sincere Present to God, but did receive it back infinitely enlightned, and enriched with treasures of never fading

ding bleſſedneſs, who then can believe this, and omit to make ſo advantagious a Preſent of his whole heart unto God? To ſhew his Faith, his Love and Obedience, as his greateſt happineſs on Earth. For we may in a way of ſpeaking (and I hope without offence) ſuppoſe the heart of man was made Triangular, as three Seats, for God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, who are all one God, as the three Corners are one Heart, which can no more be divided, than the Godhead, *Who will ſo fill it when he dwells therein*, as to leave no place for the World, the Fleſh, or the Devil, to abide there: And from hence it is, that God forſakes us, when we forſake him; *When we deliver up his Habitation in our hearts unto his enemies*, when we thruſt him out, to admit of any of thoſe Rivals into any corner of our hearts, we then affront the whole Trinity, (and drive away all them, all him) to entertain and court a deſtroying Gueſt, inſtead of the Lord of Life.

XI.

GOd will not ſuffer thoſe that are his to live in the dark; for if God be with us, he will make us ſee that he is

with

with us, and will never go out of our sight, until he has brought us where we shall never go out of his, and will sometimes make us start with a surprizing joy, to find he is *so near us, as to give our hearts a taste of the same joy we shall have in Heaven*; though infinitely increased then, and superinvested with Glory. How great comfort then must this be, when long habitual sinners are thus Blessed, thus Converted, and thus reconciled to God, by faith in Christ's blood, when God does so eminently manifest his glorious goodness, in visiting the Souls of sinners, and powerfully calling us great Criminals, to become chosen Vessels, where himself vouchsafes to dwell? To think fully of this, is to think of nothing else in comparison of this our great concern, which now begins, and now assures our Eternity with God, which is above all earthly Felicities that pass away like Dreams. (As) what signifies the *Persian*, *Grecian*, or the *Roman* Empires now? Where are those Great, Glorious, Glistering Bubbles now? Never worthy to come into competition with the higher aims of regenerate men indued with Divine love, whose Immortal Souls are fed with such Celestial joys, as can only flow

from

from their Immortal object, (God) on whom their ambitious hearts are fixed with such a lively Faith, as doth create a contempt of all earthly Fruitions, and stand ever ready as adopted Sons of God, with joy to pass through the Grave, to an immediate possession of a Crown of Glory; for when God is pleased *so to descend and dwell with us here*, it is to assure our Souls they shall ascend, and dwell with him in Heaven.

XII.

HE that has heard the Bell Toll for him to the Grave, and lives after it, will do well to call to mind what Agonies he then felt, and what Vows he then made to God on his Recovery; and now every day to examine his heart, how well he has performed those Vows, and how much fitter he now is for his next Summons thither: For every Bell that he hears now Toll for others, is his Alarm to make ready for his day of Judgment. A concern so great, that no man can guess at the terrible terrors of a dying, despairing sinner, but he that has felt them; nor can any man know the Felicity of living ever ready

to

to die, but he to whom God has given the grace to live so; and to accustom himself to compare frequently those past amazing terrors of despair (from which God did then deliver him,) with such new light by grace from above, as will exalt his Soul out of those dark despairing clouds, to expire in a full reconciliation to God at his last hour.

XIII.

IF we believe Christ on earth did all those Miracles the Gospel mentions, and that by Faith so many of all sorts were healed of their Infirmities, the same faith now *no doubt will procure the like mercies from the same Christ, now he is ascended, and united unto God the Father, where he sees all our Maladies, and hears our Cries, and is as ready now to Cure our Leprous Souls, our Withered Limbs, our Bloody Issues, and to cast out as many Legions of Devils that possess us with Pride, Envy, Lust, Revenge, Gluttony, Avarice, and all the rest of that black train:* So that if we be now as desirous to be Cured as they were then, and do cry out for Mercy as they did, *we shall be made whole like them*, and follow Christ

for

ever after, until we enter into is Eternal Rest.

XIV.

IF we obſerve how the Holy Ghoſt works on our Souls, when our ſincere devotions do raiſe our hearts to Heaven, and how much our fancy ſoars above our own reach in Extaſies of joy, and Celeſtial delight at that time, we may thereby know how God accepts ſuch Sacrifices, and by his returns of comfort, and ardent deſires to repeat ſuch addreſſes, as often as our affection and felicity does encreaſe by our devotion; for when God meets our ſincere prayers with ſuch conſolations, and inward dependance on his mercy and grace, *as will enlighten our hearts with divine love, and bring us to a conſtant converſation with him, by living a divine life*; So to wean us from the World, and fill us with ſuch holy flames from Heaven, as nothing ſhall ſhake our faith, nor divert our thoughts from making ready for our journey thither. But 'tis neither writing thus, nor talking thus, nor praying thus, but doing thus, muſt bring us thither.

XV.

IT were well if we did treat God with as much respect as we give to one another; for men generally (when invited to a great man's house) in common civility do dress themselves to their best advantage, suitable to such Company, and fit for such respect and welcom, as they expect there: How much more ought we to prepare and adorn our Souls and Bodies, when we are invited by the glorious Majesty of God unto Heaven, and by his Holy Spirit are daily solicited to come, where we are sure to be received and welcomed by his Son our Saviour, and all the Host of Heaven, with Divine Caresses, suitable to the dress we appear in; and what we want of that innocent whiteness, we shall find the Angels adorned with there, his Son will make up, by covering us all over with his bright Rayment of Celestial purity. So then, such men whose hearts are ambitious of that Ornament, and that Honour, *will prepare for it before they go, and then will not miss of being so arrayed when they come thither*; So that our sincerity in making

ready,

ready, is our work here, as it is Christ's work to own us there, and is also (in a great measure) the business of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all three as one, to encourage and contribute to assist us in our desires and endeavours towards this Holy dressing, for our blessed reception into Heaven; and our whole lives are given us here, for time to make ready to enter into that Eternal Glory at the Resurrection. Let no man then, who has faith in Christ's Bloud, afflict himself with doubts, or fears, that he knows not how to serve God acceptably; for God sees through the hearts of men, and observes such as are set humbly, and sincerely to love, serve, and obey him; *unto such he will send his Holy Spirit to fill their Souls with his guiding Light, so fully as they cannot miss their way to Heaven.*

XVI.

IF we consider the Soul of man as an Extract of the Divine nature, we may well think that true devotion is the highest Epicurism we are capable of in this World, where we may make Evangelical

Righteousness our superlative delight, and by it express our gratitude to God, in raising our hearts to Divine love of Him; So to manifest our high and glorious extraction, by a constant joyful conversation with God in humble Addresses; and so fix our election as the consummation of God's prime purpose to adorn his best Creature (Man) with his greatest blessings; for nothing can be greater than to give himself (as He always doth) unto those who desire him, in whom they have all that Heaven and Earth contains.

XVII.

WE are to seek God, and not to leave seeking till we find him, and we may be sure to find him, who desires to be found by those that seek him as they ought, and delights to be so sought, that we may be sure we have found him, that is, when we delight in him, more than in all his Creatures; *So we do not deceive our selves by mistaking our delight in God*, but are pleased with all his methods, in weaning us from the uncertain glories of this perishing World,

that our Souls may be ever soaring up to Him, when we have found him, so as not to lose him again. But we too often meet with men who have skill to make the World believe they have found God, and do enjoy him above others, and are full of Divine joys in shew, from their dissembled Piety professed, so to obtain credit and trust to deceive the Innocent (which when gained) they soon unmasque themselves to act as they designed: And then, how vast a difference is seen betwen such, and a truly Regenerate man, that has found God indeed, and does converse with his Great Maker in full tranquility of Soul, through the expectation of his joyful Resurrection from the grave! while the Hypocrite has an aking heart in the midst of all his joys, and all his hopes; *that fears to find God too soon, whom he never had a thought to seek.*

XVIII.

THE Divine Lover, who is accustomed to converse with God at midnight, will then, at first waking, find his heart so full of fervent zeal, so glowing

not, that no sleepiness can suppress those devout flames from soaring up towards Heaven, where his Soul enjoys those refreshing comforts it is used to find from the kind welcomes of his beloved, while that holy flame lasts, and when his Soul descends from this early visit, it retains the *Idea* of that delight the whole day after; still exciting this Divine Lover *to retire*, and repeat those Celestial joys, as the highest, and most delightful entertainment he can wish for on this side of Heaven: for God is the *Centre* of a Divine Lovers Soul, it cannot move from him without some impulsive force, which we should disdain to yield unto.

XIX.

HOw frail is humane Nature! that can never be so much pleased on Earth, as (within some time) not to become weary of what we most delight in: And how much greater frailty is it to know how to be ever pleased, and for ever happy! but cannot set our hearts sincerely to endeavour for it. And yet there is another frailty in some men above all the rest most wonderful! that such

such as have, on serious thoughts of [illegible] Eternity, resigned their hearts to God, and for some time, known no joy, like their transports for Heaven; that such men, so raised, should prove so weakly fixed! as boldly dare make room for Satan in their hearts again (as the more welcome guest) *where God did sometimes dwell*; this were a dreadful thing to think on; if the mercies of God were not far beyond the reach of sinners to deface. And from hence we may learn, that *holiness* is the *peculiar gift of God*, and that we are raised to all degrees of Piety by his holy Spirit, who of ourselves can neither rise nor stand one moment in his favour longer than supported by the same Spirit, thus to give us humble thoughts of our own little or no strength. And yet we are not obliged to rest in such humility, but ought to labour, and to pray for more and more Talents of faith and grace, till their encrease do raise our Souls higher and higher, in ambitious zeal to become Divine Lovers, and not to be content with less preferment than *adopted Sons*, when *we find the Holy Ghost thus at work within us*; and so may strive to raise our new

affections

affections, by holy thoughts, to the highest pitch of devout extasies of Devotion, and by this Divine experiment to try if we can love God too much, and have more zeal in prayer, than he does like of! or can so tire him with our importunate addresses, that He will turn away his face, and deny his love unto Souls wholly devoted to serve and please him. But when we find our hearts full of such sincere raptures in Devotion, we may assure our selves they come from God, who does ever approve and accept of such flaming sacrificed hearts, as are enkindled from above, and are much different from any such Enthusiams as Satan can infuse, only to infect those wavering hearts, that do still incline to be his Vassals.

XX.

THose who have obtained of God to become truly Regenerate, do find that a sincere repentance, with contrition and conversion of heart to God, are rewarded with peace of Conscience, and so great a delight in humble converse with God, on their meditations of Heaven,

Heaven, and their Eternal bliss, that all Worldly pleasures do give way to those Divine transports, *which flow from the Holy Ghost within them.* And no time so proper to meet God, as when they awake at mid-night, before any Worldly concerns entertain their hearts; for he that chearfully recommends his Soul to God, when he lyes down to rest, will to his infinite comfort, find God ready to receive his first waking ejaculations, who begins the day with the same adoration, and trusts in him, that he lay down to sleep with: so that our mid-night conferences with God, will by custom grow more pleasant than sleep, and will fix such a Divine love on our Creator, as will produce great joy here, and some glimpse of that glory we shall have in Heaven: for God never receives our sincere Addresses, without multiplying of his favours in return by such manifestations of his grace, as will preserve us in his service until we meet again, to pursue those holy meditations, which will bring us unto Him in Heaven, when we die.

XXI.

XXI.

A Righteous man is a Divine Philosopher, that enjoys all his heart can wish in this World, by his faith in Christ, Love to God, Charity to men, purity and humility. And the Holy Ghost is the great *Chymist*, that conveys all these ingredients into the furnace of a pious heart, and there, by His influence, and operation, *produces the grand Elixir of true righteousness*, which preserves the Soul unto Eternal happiness. And whoever finds the *Holy Ghost thus working in him*, will find the comfort and consolation of his Salvation in this life, which with the serious consideration of his future felicity, will be entertainment for his whole time here, and keep him always ready for his summons to Heaven; and will make his passage thither as easie to the Righteous, as it is terrible to an impenitent sinner.

XXII.

IT is impossible to fancy, and to find any Earthly entertainment for the heart

heart of man (*but Devotion*) that can raise his delights higher and higher by fruitions, without laſſitude unto Eternity: which elevated devotion, is a felicity, that the Divine Lover only has; and is created in his heart with his Reſurrection from ſin to grace, by a continual ſucceſſion of growing joys, on the aſſurance he finds of his ſecond Reſurrection to Glory at the day of Judgement; which is God's peculiar work in the Souls of his Beloved, to make them ſee that He is never abſent from ſuch as are totally devoted to love and ſerve Him; for ſuch, and only ſuch, can ſecurely enjoy God in all his Creatures here, and have him alſo to eternity in Heaven. If then the rugged way thither, be ſo pleaſant to a Righteous man, what will his Seraphick joys be there! and how worthy of our utmoſt endeavours to live ſo, that we may die capable to participate of thoſe joys then.

XXIII.

MEn do generally create terrors, to fright their own hearts, as they do Children, with ugly Vizards; we re-

pre-

present Death unto our fancies in dismal forms, as a Messenger sent from Satan to hurry us from our present delights into everlasting flames. And then 'tis no wonder, that habitual impenitent sinners, do start back from the approach of Death, when so dressed. But the Regenerate Man, has an Antidote against this evil; He summons his Celestial thoughts, and sets his Soul in order, (as a great Prince in State) incircled with Heavenly joys, (as his Nobility) and is also attended by crouds of Guardian Angels, to receive the same Death, with caresses of great friendship, who appears before him, drest in bright gorgeous Raiments, as an Embassador sent from the King of Kings, to consummate a League of Amity, and to give him possession of his new Conquest, with a Crown of Eternal Glory, long fought for, and at last obtained; So that we generally mistake our passage into the next World, and call it death, which is assured Life, (and that Eternal;) It is our faults, if we be frighted at the terrors of torment there, where everlasting joys do answer every pious mans expectations, who looks on the pangs of his departing Soul, but as the

mo-

momentary touch of a ſharp Lancet, that makes him bleed for future health; So that men prepar'd for Heaven, may change the terrible aſpect of a griſly Death into a Divine Angelical form, fit to be courted with a moſt hearty welcome, who is ſent by God to conduct us unto Him, where every wiſe good man deſires to be; *and this is a great mark of the Holy Ghoſt on the hearts of men*, to bring ſinners to ſuch an Evangelical felicity, to live ſo in Gods favour, as to rejoyce to ride on Deaths Chariot in Triumph into Heaven.

XXIV.

A Pious man is *never alone* when *moſt alone*; but then takes more delight in his approaches to God, then this World can afford the greateſt Epicure; for his devout heart is ever on the wing towards the Throne of mercy; from whence his Soul is filled with Divine comforts beyond expreſſion, for God never fails to entertain a ſincere Soul with high conſolations.

XXV.

Watch thy first waking thoughts which will declare thy Soul unto thy self; whether Carnally minded, or Spirituallized! for then is thy fancy fresh, unclogg'd with Worldly affairs, and then the time to blow up thy flaming gratitude to God, in some proportion towards what thou hast received from Him in mercies, and in blessings, (though short in point of merit,) yet such holy times, such pious ambitious contests, God allows of, and is well pleased to see such use made of his grace, by such Divine emulations in the hearts of men, who do endeavour to raise up their gratitude in competition with his benefits: But this must be in such humble Addresses, as doth become Dust and Ashes, who can do nothing of our selves, (that is good) *nor think beyond what we receive, and must thank God for the thanks we give him*; *For it is the Holy Ghost that excites, and enables us to such a frequent and free conversation with our Great Maker*; by which elevated zeal, and sincere affection in our daily acknowledgments, we shew,

ſhew, that we have ſome taſte of that joy, and ſome glimpſe of that glory here, which we expect in Heaven; and is ſome Teſtimony, that we have not received the grace of God altogether in vain. *For no Man can give effectual thanks to God for his mercies, until he find ſome aſſurance of his reconciliation by the Bloud of Jeſus Chriſt*, which is the Fountain of all mercies, and the great argument for our gratitude to the Father of mercies, who forgives tranſgreſſions to raiſe our gratitude to Love.

XXVI.

WHoever has ſo much Faith, as to create true notions of the Holy Trinity, and Gods eternal habitation of Glory, and Bliſs in Heaven; where he believes that Chriſt has purchaſed places for all penitent reconciled ſinners; that man cannot chuſe but wiſh, and indeavour to be one of that bleſſed number ſo redeemed from Hell, and raiſed to everlaſting Glory on Chriſts account: But how to attain unto this felicity, and to find in our hearts that we have attained it, is our greateſt work in this World,

and our moſt joyful entertainment here, which is a pre-poſſeſſion of Heaven, as much as our frail nature is capable of with the Divine aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt; So then, we muſt obſerve if our hearts are become ſo Regenerate, as to find more pleaſure in our approaches to God, and our devout converſation with Him, then all the fruitions this world can afford us; for then we ſhall find an *inward dependance on God in our own hearts, ſuch as will guide us by his Divine guiding Light*, unto the means and methods of attaining our wiſhed ſalvation, and within a little time certainly grow to a much more habitual delight in Piety, then our forſaken ſins formerly were; and will hold our hearts up to Heaven, ever ready to enter in, when Death comes to conduct us thither; and it will be great joy to paſs the pangs of a Death-bed, and terrors of the Grave, with an aſſurance that our Souls ſhall be with God, the moment that we depart from this World, if we live Righteouſly in it.

XXVII.

XXVII.

IF we give our whole hearts to God, *wherever we are, whatever we do, our minds will be fixed on Him* (the only Centre of our Souls intrinſick happineſs); 'tis like a man forced from his beloved companion, by ſome great affair; he diſpatches it quickly, and with ſpeed returns where he left his heart; And thus we may try our hearty Love to God. But when trivial objects, and vain diverſions, do eaſily withdraw us from his converſe, and then detain us whole days in idleneſs, ſo as to afford God but ſome few moments, for our morning, and evening Sacrifices; we may reckon that our Love bears the ſame proportion with the time ſpent in his ſervice: we may alſo find on a ſtrict ſearch, that we are miſtaken in the Donation of our hearts to God, by keeping of a ſmall corner of our hearts in reſerve for diverſions, only to gratifie ſome fair-faced appetites, which do inſenſibly rob the major part, until that corner have ingroſſed the whole heart; by which we fool our ſelves, to think our All-ſeeing God will be mocked

with ſuch thin Vizards on our hearts. *Take heed therefore of idle diverſions*, and pray for grace to become Regenerate, to ſet thy heart on things above, which begets true Love to God, with Bleſſedneſs here, and for ever; which eternity can never be too much thought on, nor the Lord who diſpoſes of Eternity, be too much loved, or too much feared; and if when we lye down to ſleep, we could but learn to think that we might wake in the other World; we ſhould labour to live cloſe up to God, *ſo that Satan may find no time, to come between to tempt*; and then ſuch reconciled ſinners would diſcern their converſion to be a ſure Teſtimony of God's mercy, *and the Spirit of Faith fixing the foundation of true Piety*, by which we muſt aſcend, as the firſt ſtep *of that Ladder towards Heaven.*

XXVIII.

IT is a ſtupendious thing, to think how our corrupt Duſt and Aſhes, may be exalted, *when the Spirit of God is at work in the heart of man*, when a great ſinner is cleanſed from his pollutions, and all his paſt tranſgreſſions are ſo wiped off by the

the Holy Ghoſt, in the receiving of the Sacrament, that he finds *Chriſt born within him*, and his Soul filled with a new kind of Divine tranſports, which raiſe him in Meditations up to Heaven, by ſuch devout Addreſſes, as grow higher and higher in ambitious zeal to be near God, until he obtain to be owned an Adopted Son, and while he remains on Earth, by Faith to ſhare with Angels in ſome degree of Heavenly joy, and to perceive ſome beams of their Glory, which he ſhall participate of at the Reſurrection; and until then, be here feaſted with ſuch devout Celeſtial delights, *as will give him an aſſurance that theſe are the marks of his Election, to comfort, and to fix his heart on God*, who will guide his Soul through his Pilgrimage on Earth (full of ſtorms, *and calms more dangerous*) untill He brings him unto his Glory; For if we believe it to be Goſpel-truth, that our bodies are capable to become the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt dwelling in us, *we muſt alſo believe that He will manifeſt Himſelf ſo as we ſhall diſcern his being in us*, by ſuch a Divine Life, with ſuch extaſies of joy, as no Soul can reach without his aſſiſtance; which

which if we practiſe to obſerve, we ſhall find will prove to be our greateſt conſolation that the heart of man can have.

XXIX.

WE talk of Death, as we do of Eating, Drinking, and Sleeping; and do flatter our ſelves too much, by thinking we are as ready for the Grave, without a full conſideration, how nice, and great a preparation is fit for our appearance at the Reſurrection; when our whole Lives here, ſpent in the ſervice of God, is not too high a price for the Crown of Glory we then expect. And yet few men do afford the hundred part of their time, to become capable to receive that ineſtimable Purchaſe, which Chriſt has made for us by his bloud-ſhed. And nothing is more ſtrange, then that we ſhould ſo much forget what we are always a doing, (which is dying) and is God's great mercy to free our Souls from the Dungeon of this World, to fix them in his Eternal Bliſs.

XXX.

XXX.

GOD sees our first intentional approches towards Heaven, so that we cannot make more haſt in our Addreſſes unto Him, then He makes to meet and welcom our ſincere devotions, with Raptures, and Extaſies of joy, to encourage, and guide our frail nature to love, and ſerve Him above the World; that can in no degree afford ſo high delights as our Souls find, when our whole hearts are offered up to Him in daily Sacrifice, while that holy flame laſts.

XXXI.

OUr greateſt concern, is to live ſo Righteouſly, as to be ever ready to die; which no man can think of too often, nor prepare to much for, if he conſiders that every moment advances towards the Grave, through which we muſt paſs to Eternal joy, or Eternal miſery; and is an argument enough, not to miſpend our time, *but Day and Night to call on God, for his Divine guiding Light to ſhew us the way to Him.*

XXXII.

SLeep is so like Death, that it is no wonder if we Dream often that we are amongst the dead; for though we are not now visited by Visions as of old! yet such frequent conversation with dead friends when we Sleep, may be looked on as kind notions from above, to give us some reflections on the Grave, towards which we do walk as fast in our Sleep, as when we are awake, so that we ought to imploy more of our thoughts on every minute that so hasts on to our Eternity, then men generally do; and by such Dreams we may learn to converse Day and Night with God in our humble Addresses, to make us fit company for His departed Saints when we Die.

XXXIII.

IF we could attain to as great Faith, as the first Martyrs had, we might have as much felicity in Piety as they had; who rejoyced so much to leave this World, that no torments could deter them

them from death, to be with Christ. And if we could raise our Souls to fancy the Glory of Heaven as they did, we should believe that nothing there, is so dirty as our brightest Diamonds, where the beauty of Holiness by Faith, as by reflection, does Eclipse all the beauty, wealth, honour, and glory of this World, in the hearts of such as are become Regenerate. And if our Souls were so sanctified, and advanced in Divine Love, as those Blessed Martyrs were, we should admit no Rivals with God in our hearts, where He delights to Reign alone. And then, *we should find our God every where with us*, carefully providing for all our wants, and supplying all our defects, as if He attended on us Dust and Ashes, with his Providence to guard us while we sleep, and to watch if our first waking thoughts be set on Him, and to expect them as his due, and his delight; as if the Almighty courted us for favours, more then we do him for his mercies, and his blessings; and when our Souls become thus enlightned by his Divine Rays from Heaven, *we shall find our hearts so full of Him, that a Wilderness, a Prison, or a Dungeon will seem a Throne,*

and

and will be our Heaven here; and then we ſhall know no joy like having God ever in our ſight, with hearts fixed on our Eternal Bliſs already thus begun.

XXXIV.

IF we conſider the extent of Miracles, thoſe we call the greateſt, are but as wonderful as the ſmalleſt, for every thing we ſee, all we think, every motion that anſwers to our thoughts in every part of our ſelves is Miraculous, (as to Duſt and Aſhes) and ſo in the ſame Ballance, we may weigh our Birth, and Diſſolution, and Reſurrection to be equally Miraculous. But if we conſult our own conſciences, and throughly examine our own hearts, we may be confirmed in the belief that there is no higher Miracle, then when the Holy Ghoſt turns the hearts of men from their long habitual, idolized, carnal appetites, into a Spiritual affection towards God, with ſuch Heavenly tranſports as do create the peace of conſcience, with ſuch a ſettled joy in God's ſervice, as will accompany our Souls from hence to Heaven; which Spiritual Reſurrection from ſin, being God's

God's work in us, is a ſure mark of our Adoption, and by this Miracle of mercy to become thus Regenerate, we may account it the higheſt! becauſe of higheſt concern to us, to be ſo raiſed from Hell, to Heaven; And a greater Miracle to confirm the Chriſtian Doctrine, no man needs to ſeek after, then what he may thus find in himſelf, if thus led by the Holy Ghoſt! and thus exalted from Reprobate Duſt, to be the Adopted Son of God.

XXXV.

PIety is the beſt policy, becauſe by it we obtain all that the heart of man can wiſh in this World, and the next, which every Pious man has a great proportion of here, and the Fool only thinks he can mock God, or flatter Him; while he does only deceive himſelf, in hoping to ſerve God, and the Devil at once; to ſatisfie vitious natural appetites, and enjoy Spiritual felicities at the ſame time, as if the way to Heaven were through Hell; But if we do doubt whether Eternal happineſs, is preferable before ſhort fruition on Earth, *we may enquire of a Vo-*

luptuous ſinner when he is become truly Regenerate, if he does not find that the peace of conſcience is a more conſtant delight, then the greateſt Momentary gratifications of fleſh and bloud. For when he is ſo called to an aſſurance of his Sonſhip, by his Spiritual comforts from the Holy Ghoſt within him, and ſuch tranſports as do afford Heavenly joys, with ſome glimps of that Glory, which he ſhall participate of at the Reſurrection; He will perceive it is the ſame gift of God, beyond humane acquiſition; ſo that mans beſt policy is to lead a pious Life, which will fully ſatisfie all his ambitions, and anſwer the higheſt affections his heart can fancy, by having God ſo, by whom he has all that is in Heaven, and in Earth. And whoever God does thus give himſelf to, will find that he has Him, and will perceive this is his Spiritual Adoption, to incourage and inable him to live Righteouſly all his days in more honour, Glory, wealth, and felicity, then all the Empires of this World can afford without God: ſo that Piety is the beſt policy to eſtabliſh our happineſs in this World and the next:

XXXVI.

THere can be no comfort in this World, beyond an aſſurance of ſins forgiven, with a full reconciliation to God; and no man can have ſurer marks of his Election, then to find his former contempt of God, turned into Divine Love of him, *with the Holy Ghoſt converting the Hell that was in his heart, into a Paradice by his habitation there*; which is an infallible earneſt of Glory; for when God gives us grace to will, and to do his will, *by the power of his Spirit*, we ſhall want no comforts here, and be alſo filled with holy courage, and a joyful Faith to turn the terrors of the Grave, into a delightful deſire to be with God; which is a Righteous mans greateſt conſolation.

XXXVII.

IF a Regenerate man, bleſſed with Divine Love, do obſerve how the Holy Ghoſt works in his heart, at the time of his ſincere vigorous Addreſſes to the Throne of mercy; He will find that his

delight in the ſervice of God, does increaſe with his devotion, and that his devotion is raiſed by that delight; ſo that his Soul by cuſtom in ſuch approaches, does grow higher and higher, by ſo joyful a confidence in God's favour, that no allurements can divert his Love, nor ſtorms ſhake that truſt on which his peace of conſcience is ſurely founded here, and his ſalvation at the Reſurrection as ſure. Yet care muſt be had that ſuch Elevations of the Soul, *may not grow beyond thoſe Goſpel Rules ſet us to follow*; So that the felicity of piety may be ſometimes allayed *by humble recollections of our own unworthineſs*, (when at beſt) leſt Spiritual pride do puff up our hearts with ſuch Seraphick joys, as uſe to riſe from ſuch extaſies in devotion; (ſo as to think) if Angels in the preſence of God, do rejoyce at the converſion of a ſinner, what joy may that ſinner have, above thoſe Angels? who is ſo much more concerned then they are, when he finds himſelf ſnatched up from the brink of Hell, and become *as an Angel in Heaven, before he arrives there*; Which is a kind of Epicuriſm in devotion, and may be too much indulged, if not acknowledged from whence

whence it comes, with gratitude for so great a benefit received.

XXXVIII.

CHrist gave us a sure Rule to know, and to shew our Love to God, which is (*to obey his Commandments*) and not to treat Him like our fellow creatures, *with passionate words, sighs, or tears, or joys, but by the sincerity of our thoughts, and actions, to shew our obedience better then by vehement extasies in devotion; though such exterior declarations from the heart, do advance our zeal, they may deceive us with flattering hopes of our being better then really we are; for 'tis not our frequent prayers, nor hearing the Word preached with delight, nor receiving the Holy Sacrament with an elevated Faith, that fully expresses, or denotes such Love to God, as He expects from us, but it is our utmost endeavours in all self-denials, towards an uniform obedience to all his known Commandments, an Evangelical sincerity in the duty required, that manifests our Love to God, and is most acceptable to Him*; for though our performances do prove short of our Duties,

God ſees our integrity, and eſteems us for that; our ſincerity towards obedience, is very acceptable with God.

XXXIX.

GOd ſees our frailties, and knows that no mans fancy can reach the felicity of Divine Love, but his, *who is endued with it from Him*; nor can that man by words expreſs thoſe joys that his tranſported Soul finds, in ſuch welcoms as God affords in his Divine endearments to his true Lover, by ſuch Celeſtial Raptures, as do make him forget that he dwells on Earth, while that bright flame of his Devotion laſts; and on his return from Heaven, while the thoughts of that Bleſſed Addreſs remains, it grieves him to find that he is ſtill on Earth, ſo that his body cannot mount upwards with his Soul, to the Throne of Glory, and fix there together.

XL.

HOw weak is our Faith, in the matter of Death; and how ſtrong the frailty of our nature, *that makes us fear*

to

to go, where we desire to be? So to create terrors in the passage, when there is really none, or if any, they are such as cannot be avoided: how vain then is it to raise melancholly-Clouds to Eclipse the Glory, *and dull the joy* we are entring into, the moment that we Die?

XLI.

GReat converted sinners ought frequently to consider the wonderful goodness of God, for his double mercies, who does not only forgive all past transgressions, on our reconciliation; but on our future obedience, our Faith, Love, and gratitude, He rewards such great sinners with grace to obtain Eternal Bliss; easie conditions to be admitted by God's immense goodness unto this purchase of mercy, and reward on Christs account. Which grace we must improve by rising still higher and higher in God's favour for the future; and then we shall have a double joy in all such fruitions, and diversions, as we may own in God's sight here, and at the day of Judgment, and may now thank him for; with hearts full of purity, and such bright shining innocence, as God delights in.

XLII.

XLII.

God's Spirit is never absent from those that seek him sincerely, and whoever observes it, will find it so.

God Loves a Souls whiteness, that flies all approaches towards sin, with detestation. When God delivers a penitent sinner from the slavery of Satan, to rejoyce in the freedom of his service, it is to shew him a glimpse of Heaven, to invite him thither.

XLIII.

AS a good conscience is a continual feast, and a great blessing, so 'tis a dangerous thing to be over-much delighted with our best duties, (though peace be in them) lest we should forget from whence all our performances do come; and so undiscernedly attribute holiness to our selves, which is God's peculiar gift. There ought also great care to be had, that we be not mistaken, to think we do enjoy true peace of conscience, when we have it not; and that we do not flatter and abuse our own

hearts,

hearts, with ſome things of fancy, like more holineſs then we have; and ſo believe our vows, and deſires to Piety, are effectual performed, before our actions do juſtifie thoſe good reſolutions, and ſelf-denials, to avoid ſuch ſnares, *as lie concealed under innocent diverſions*; leſt we fall, when we think our ſelves moſt ſafe: So *that a Pious man is to be as careful how to manage his Piety, as a ſinner is to obtain it.*

XLIV.

WHen we are aſſaulted by any temptations to ſin, we may recollect our thoughts thus, ſhall I, for this moment of ſenſuality, part with my intereſt in God? ſhall I quit my Sonſhip, now I am reconciled; and my Title to an Eternal Crown of Glory in Heaven, to *ſatisfie my vitious fancy, and a few momentary appetites on Earth?* and now caſt off the felicity, and ſecurity I have by peace of conſcience, while I Love, fear, and ſerve God, and by my truſting Faith in Chriſt, do ſtand faſt fixed above the reach of malice, and all the ſtorms this World can raiſe? Shall I depart from this

this Regenerate ſtate ſo full of Bleſſedneſs, to become a trembling Coward, frightned at every ſhadow of every evil that approaches me; and ſo become juſtly terrified with the horrour of a deſpairing Soul, when Death approaches, which may be this minute, to ſtep into that Eternal woe, denounced againſt the ſin I am tempted to commit? Such reflections, with ſuch ſincere prayers as ſuch Meditations will ſuggeſt, are ſurely good guards to defend and free us from the danger of yielding to any temptations to ſin.

XLV.

A True penitent ſinner, whoſe heart is touched (by grace from Heaven) with remorſe for his wicked life, and a ſence of God's many mercies to him; (He repents) and recollects, to the beſt of his memory, all the actual, and mental tranſgreſſions of his whole life; and offers them up to God in confeſſion, with an humble ſincere contrition; and makes new vows *for an univerſal cleanſing from all iniquities, with a total reſignation of himſelf, Soul, and body, in a full obedi-*

obedience unto all the Gospel Laws for the future. Thus, this Penitent sets himself with holy vigour, and his utmost endeavours, to walk after his Saviours steps, submitting his will, to God's will in all things; whose favour he now seeks with so great hungering and thirsting affection, that God in mercy has cancelled all the Records of his long neglects, and insolent repeated sins; so as to remember them no more: and also by his Divine power does raise this Penitent *to a Spiritual Resurrection* from sin, to grace, and so fills his contented, converted heart with frequent comforts, and such *assurance of his Adoption, as to encourage him to perform this new Covenant unto the end of his Life.*

By which infinite mercy, and grace, this Penitent does become so Regenerate, *as to perceive the Spirit of God at work within him,* raising his Soul to such a Sacred Love of his great Maker, as to think all time mispent, that is not imployed in gratitude to God, for his diliverance from Hell, and his Promotion towards Heaven; of which Glory, he has now some prospect, and from hence, he grows higher in Gods favour, until his

his holy ambitions do increaſe, deſiring to be always in his Creators ſight, and aiming at a Favourites Sons place in the Court of Heaven; Thus by degrees his Soul becomes ſo elevated, and tranſported with theſe Celeſtial honours, that he contemns the Empires of this World, with all the gliſtering objects here below, as unworthy to divert his thoughts on ſuch periſhing trifles as he did admire, before his heart was fixed above on his Eternal Bliſs; which now fills his Soul with ſuch continual joyful extaſies in Devotion, that he is ſometimes frighted at the joy he feels, leſt he may embrace preſumptuous Enthuſiaſms, by ſuch high conſolations as his Soul delights in, when his Meditations, and Addreſſes do aſcend in ſuch bright flaming zeal unto the Throne of Mercy; But when he conſiders that God, (who ſees his ſincerity through his heart) will not reject ſuch ſincere Sacrifices; *He then hopes that theſe joys do ariſe from the Emanation of the Holy Ghoſt*, to let him ſee how God receives, and welcoms a whole heart offer'd up to Him; with ſuch *Divine Lights* as Earthly Souls can neither ſee, nor comprehend; and by this taſt of

Bliſs,

Bliſs, and by this beam of Glory here, he judges how much greater he ſhall have in Heaven! And thus, upon a full ſearch of his whole heart throughout, this Penitent now finds with great felicity, that God is pleaſed to dwell in his heart, where Satan did ſo long triumph: until theſe new tranſports for his Celeſtial Bliſs have quite extinguiſhed thoſe dim ſhadows of delight that formerly miſled him to neglect his God, with a ſerious thought of Heaven, or Hell; or the leaſt concern for his Eternity; until his Soul was thus raiſed above the reach of his iniquities, by his converſing day and night in Heaven. And thus the Soul of this new Convert, is careſſed with bright Seraphick joys, by Grace ſo fixed, and ſo enlightned from above, that his inward dependance on God, is his continual conſolation, and ſupport; full of ſuch high comforts, as he muſt think *do proceed from the Holy Ghoſt, to furniſh this his new Temple with ſufficient Grace, where he now intends to dwell.* And by all theſe *Bleſſed guiding Lights*, this Penitent is invited to live ſuch a Righteous Life, as will give him an humble aſſurance to truſt, and rejoyce in his reconciliation,

with a ſettled Faith that he ſhall ſee the face of God, in the face of Death, the moment that he dies; his Soul ſhall be with Chriſt, where his departed Saints abide, until the Reſurrection.

XLVI.

WE need no better Argument for God's Love to us, then our Love of Him; which is the higheſt work of his Grace planted in our hearts, by which only we are enlightned to know how to love, and ſerve God as we ought; that we may be capable to enter into his Eternal Glory, prepared for his Lovers.

XLVII.

[*A Prayer.*]

LOrd Jeſus, I beſeech thee forgive my tranſgreſſions, and now ſend down thy Holy Spirit to cleanſe my heart from all impurities, and then dwell there, to guide my Meditations, and Prayers aright, with ſuch fervent Zeal, as will encreaſe my Faith, my Love, and truſt in thee my God; that I may know *no*

joy

joy on Earth, like my approaches to thy Throne; and from thence impower me ſo to practiſe theſe great Leſſons I have writ, as to live with holy courage, ever ready to die, and fit to appear at thy Tribunal, on the great day of Judgment, with ſuch reconciled Sinners as by thy infinite mercy are become the Sons of God. Lord, I beſeech thee let my heart be now ſo filled with Divine tranſporting thoughts of Thee, and thy Salvation, as to leave no place for Satan there; that *my enlightned Soul may be ever on the wing, haſting towards that Eternal Bliſs, which Thou haſt purchaſed for me at ſo high a rate*! And though my Zeal (ſupported by thy Grace) do now encreaſe, let me never think my ſelf near enough to Heaven, till I am there. For now I find that no repulſes will make Satan quit the Field, nor my Rebellious Sences to obey, that I may gain a perfect Victory, beyond the reach of a ſurprize; nor can I alone maintain this Chriſtian Warfare, without Thy ſtrong ſupplies from Heaven; for which I daily pray, and by which I ſhall at laſt ſubdue the World, and my own heart, with all the Powers of Hell, and Death together:

Then from the Grave, in Triumph riſe with thee, my God, and thy departed Saints, to my Eternal Reſt, in thy Celeſtial Glory.

XLVIII.

THe uncertain, certain time of death, was by Divine Providence concealed from Mankind, to make us live ever ready for that great concern, *which ſets a period to our Mortality, the ſame moment on which our Immortality depends for Eternal joy, or miſery*; yet this known truth, by all believed, is by our perverſe nature ſo much neglected, as if not believed, or as if by our wiſdom and care, we could foreſee, or prevent the moment of our Diſſolution, contrary to God's decree: by which blind contradiction, few men do prepare for their Paſs to Heaven, until too late; and ſo become wilfully ſurprized by an Enemy we might ſubdue, if ready Armed, and well prepar'd for the encounter; *for 'tis we that make Death terrible, who is ſent in kindneſs to conduct unto everlaſting Bliſs, unleſs we by our Impiety, do compell him to lead us the wrong way, into eternal Flames.* A near dead-

dead-deſpairing ſinner, reviving from the Jaws of the Grave, can beſt deſcribe its terrors, and beſt judge of the felicity to become fit to die, when next ſummoned to ſtep into his Eternity.

XLIX.

THough we cannot gueſs at the glorious Eſſence of God, nor fancy what Heaven is; nor can tell whether the Joy, or Glory there be greateſt, nor do know any thing whereby we may expreſs either of them; yet by our Faith in all Goſpel-truths, *God does ſo enlighten, and encourage thoſe Souls that are wholly devoted to love, and ſerve him, and that approach his preſence with ſuch humble Zeal, and ſincere Awe, as is due to His Almightineſs! that He ſometimes deſcends into the hearts of ſuch men, and ſpiritually dwells there, as in his own Temple*; and ſometimes raiſes the Souls of men, with ſuch high tranſports of Sacred Love to Him, that they are filled with Holy Air, or ſomething nameleſs, ſo Divine for joy and glory, while that Seraphick flame doth laſt; it looks like Raptures, and holy Extaſies, ſent from Heaven to invite

men thither, by ſhewing them ſo vaſt a difference of delight, between Heaven, and Earthly fruitions; ſo to encourage us to expell all carnal Vapours, when ever they ariſe to interpoſe, that *nothing may Eclipſe that Divine Light from ſhining on us, by which God gives us grace to endeavour with all our power to raiſe up our hearts to Him*, as often and as high as our clogged Souls can mount with ſuch a weight of fleſh and bloud about them. But when the Holy Ghoſt lends wings to a Divine Lovers heart in his devotions, nothing can hinder his Souls aſcent to Heaven! and by Faith to raiſe his fancy to ſuch a joyful converſation with God, as will enrich his mind with chearful thoughts the whole day after.

L.

IF *the felicity of Piety were as generally known, as it is deſpiſed, there would be more Saints, then Reprobates on Earth*: But, as it is Satans chief work to amuſe, and abuſe our frail natures, with preſent fruitions of fallacious delights that laſt not: ſo it muſt be our buſineſs to get better Guides, that we may find our way

to

to Heaven, in ſpight of His diverſions; which the Pious man finds in a conſtant converſation with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, in his ſincere Meditations and Prayers; when They are all at work within him, raiſing his Soul to ſuch a Divine felicity, that he has no room for ſuch contemptible delights as carnal fancies can ſuggeſt to divert him: *for his pious Life keeps him as much above all the fading gaieties of this World, as the Reprobate is enſlaved to them:* And if it were poſſible to make a voluptuous Epicure ſee, and reliſh thoſe continual joys, which true peace of conſcience affords to a Regenerate man, it might wean him from his miſtaken momentary happineſs; *while the Pious mans felicity, is founded on a ſure Rock that reaches up to Heaven, and ſhews him ſuch a delightful proſpect of his Eternal Intereſt there, as gives him a holy courage to outface Death,* when he chearfully ſubmits unto his ſummons to the Grave, as the only Gate to Heaven.

LI.

THe *great felicity of true Piety, is only known to the Regenerate man,* become a Divine Lover, whoſe Soul is ever buſie in fervent Addreſſes to his Beloved, from whom he receives ſuch welcom, that his tranſported Soul forgets this World, while that bright flame burns within him; which fills his heart with ſuch tranſcending joys, in converſation with his Beloved, as can only be expreſſed, when two ſuch Divine Rivals meet, with pleaſure to repeat the great favours that both do daily receive from the glorious object of their Love, and with ſuch Angelical affections to each other, as doth raiſe their felicities, by the holy emulation their united hearts have to joyn in a conſtant Adoration of their Beloved, whoſe univerſal kindneſs does afford ſo great pleaſure, and conſolation to all his true Lovers, that their joys increaſe by the number of new Rivals; which makes them invite all they can get, into their Society; and together ſing *Hallelujahs* on Earth, until they be added unto thoſe Choirs of Angels, already in the Glory of God.

LII.

LII.

WE all know that we are every moment dying, and *that Death is but the laſt puff of breath*; *and though nothing elſe be worth the thinking on, nothing is leſs thought on then Death, which we can neither prevent, nor delay*; and ſhould therefore be made as eaſie as we can, by a conſtant expectation of his approach, (becauſe ſurprizes are moſt terrible) which the Divine Lover is ever Armed for, and beſt knows how to baffle that great Conqueror, by chearful embraces as a welcom Friend, who comes to conduct him to his Souls joy in Heaven; which holy Valour, God always provides his Lovers with, at their hour of death.

LIII.

A *Divine Lover has ever in mind the glorious Idea of his Beloved, and remembers that he is always in His ſight*, who doth obſerve all his looks, thoughts, words, and actions, how they do agree with his profeſſed Love; that is, if the whole

whole man be reſigned up to ſtudy, and to do the will of his Beloved, with a chearful heart, as the ſupreme delight, and fulleſt happineſs his Soul can wiſh for here on Earth. This Divine Lover does alſo take all the opportunities he can every day and night, by holy Meditations and Prayers to approach the Throne of Mercy with a ſincere heart, ſo full of his Beloved, as to leave no room for ſin, or Worldly vanities to abide there, either to divert, or clog his Soul, when raiſed on the wings of fervent Devotion: And thus he ſpends his time, ever ſtriving to pleaſe, and as careful not to offend his Beloved, ſtill jealous leſt any undiſcerned Rival, ſhould in ſome friendly diſguiſe ſteal into his heart, and claim a place there; ſo to deface that Altar, and defame his daily ſacrificed heart, entirely offer'd up to his Beloved; and every night lies down to Reſt with the ſame Zeal, and inward dependance on his Souls joy, with a full aſſurance, that if he awake in the other World, he ſhall be with his Beloved there; from whence ſuch growing comforts do ariſe, as to confirm his Adoption, and fix his Faith to live ſo Righteouſly, that he enjoys

joys God in all his Creatures here, with great satisfaction. Yet with holy courage, is ever so ready to die, that in spight of his natural aversion from the Grave, he resolves to rejoyce at his summons thither, where he stedfastly believes to meet his Beloved ready to raise him to his Eternal Glory. For *though the Hill we climb to Heaven, be full of Thorns and Briars, we may gather Roses, and Lillies in our ascent, to make it more easie*; if we do mind how our Celestial joys increase, as we arrive towards the last step we make, to enter into that Glory.

LIV.

GOD mocks no man with a false Light, that begs his guiding Light sincerely, with such a dependance on Him, as shews a Faith capable to receive it, and to be led by it; so as to embrace, and welcom such Divine operations, and comforts, as the Holy Ghost conveys with that Light so clearly into his Soul, that he must see it comes from God; and which will raise his heart by this Light thus led, to find such a spiritual joyful trust, and confidence in his great Maker, that no storms

whole man be reſigned up to ſtudy, and to do the will of his Beloved, with a chearful heart, as the ſupreme delight, and fulleſt happineſs his Soul can wiſh for here on Earth. This Divine Lover does alſo take all the opportunities he can every day and night, by holy Meditations and Prayers to approach the Throne of Mercy with a ſincere heart, ſo full of his Beloved, as to leave no room for ſin, or Worldly vanities to abide there, either to divert, or clog his Soul, when raiſed on the wings of fervent Devotion: And thus he ſpends his time, ever ſtriving to pleaſe, and as careful not to offend his Beloved, ſtill jealous leſt any undiſcerned Rival, ſhould in ſome friendly diſguiſe ſteal into his heart, and claim a place there; ſo to deface that Altar, and defame his daily ſacrificed heart, entirely offer'd up to his Beloved; and every night lies down to Reſt with the ſame Zeal, and inward dependance on his Souls joy, with a full aſſurance, that if he awake in the other World, he ſhall be with his Beloved there; from whence ſuch growing comforts do ariſe, as to confirm his Adoption, and fix his Faith to live ſo Righteouſly, that he enjoys

joys God in all his Creatures here, with great ſatisfaction. Yet with holy courage, is ever ſo ready to die, that in ſpight of his natural averſion from the Grave, he reſolves to rejoyce at his ſummons thither, where he ſtedfaſtly believes to meet his Beloved ready to raiſe him to his Eternal Glory. For *though the Hill we climb to Heaven, be full of Thorns and Briars, we may gather Roſes, and Lillies in our aſcent, to make it more eaſie*; if we do mind how our Celeſtial joys increaſe, as we arrive towards the laſt ſtep we make, to enter into that Glory.

LIV.

GOD *mocks no man with a falſe Light, that begs his guiding Light ſincerely, with ſuch a dependance on Him*, as ſhews a Faith capable to receive it, and to be led by it; ſo as to embrace, and welcom ſuch Divine operations, and comforts, as the Holy Ghoſt conveys with that Light ſo clearly into his Soul, that he muſt ſee it comes from God; and which will raiſe his heart by this Light thus led, to find ſuch a ſpiritual joyful truſt, and confidence in his great Maker, that no ſtorms

ſtorms can fright him, nor vain delights divert him from his conſtant courſe towards Heaven, nor ſhake his aſſurance of a bleſſed participation of God's Glory at the Reſurrection. So that the greateſt ſinner that can obtain Grace to repent, and forſake his ſins, ſo as to be thus led to live ever after in God's favour, will not fail to be received into God's boſom the moment that he dies.

LV.

IT is too true that thou art fallen into diſgrace, and doſt deſerve it, (thus:) Suppoſe thy heart to be a Royal Fort, entruſted to thy keeping and defence, by the *King of Kings*, (for ſo it is) and is beſieged by Satan, *with an Hoſt of Giant ſins*, diſturbing thee with continual *loud Alarms*, and frequent ſharp Aſſaults: yet *by thy ſtrong Guards within*, (from Heaven ſent) *and thy conſtant vigilance, with holy Valour thou bravely didſt repulſe this mighty Enemy, and haſt gain'd many Victories*; for which, thy King did promiſe to reward thy Virtues with a Crown of Glory. But by thy *ſucceſs grown proud*, and ſecurely confident of thy own conduct,

duct, and miſtaken power, thou didſt become *ſo negligent of thy Out-guards*, and *ſo remiſs within*, that the *ſubtle Enemy* was encouraged to *return* with *Stratagems*, and did by his inſinuating Spies, corrupt thy *chief Officers* who let in a *few Pigmie ſins*, (fly Foes) diſguis'd like *ſmiling Friends*, full of flattering allurements; ſuch, as in ſhort time were by thee admitted, and entertain'd, and ſo far truſted, as to get an opportunity to ſurprize thy Fort, and to lead thee in Satans Chains towards his Eternal Darkneſs. Thus the *glory* of all thy firſt *Victories*, are by thy *preſumption* and *ſupine* negligence, turned into *reproach*; and thy *reward* into a juſt *puniſhment*, for being ſo baffled by a *Conquer'd Enemy*: until by thy *ſubmiſſion*, and *repentance*, thou be *reſtored to favour*, and *deliver'd* from this *Captivity*, by a more *powerful Conqueror*.

LVI.

AS to love God and fear Him, *is certainly to pleaſe him*; *ſo, to do neither, is as ſure to offend him*: and on this, which we ſo little regard, our preſent,

and Eternal happineſs depends. So that we cannot be too watchful, that our own hearts do not deceive us, by thinking that God only Reigns there, where his Creatures have more Intereſt then Himſelf. But He is not to be mocked with outward ſhews, or formal Ceremonies; He diſcerns our neglects, when our hearts are alienated from him in the leaſt degree, and ſees through all our diſguiſes, when with burning Souls we adore his Creatures joyntly with Himſelf, if not before Him! who never will admit of ſuch Competitors, as thoſe Idols of our ſetting up are; whom we worſhip, love, fear, and delight to converſe with more hours every day, then we do afford Him; by which 'tis evident, that God has not our whole hearts, and ſo does not Reign there.

LVII.

THat peace of conſcience which is grounded on the felicity of piety, is ſuch a continual feaſt, full of ſuch growing joys, as only the Regenerate man can feel, by the Divine Love he finds his own heart full of, with ſuch returns of gratitude to God,

God, as begets a kind of Raptures, and Extaſies in Devotion, ſuch as do invite and encourage him to a delightful ſincerity in all his Addreſſes to his great Maker; with whom he converſes day and night, where he ever finds acceſs, and high returns of grace from God.

LVIII.

A *Particular ſelf-denial of ſome darling ſin, may ſhew a good inclination to Piety*, but is not the perfection of that Duty, which muſt be univerſal to all that God forbids; and not only to forbear actual tranſgreſſions for a time, but for ever: elſe we fortifie in vain, by leaving ſuch gaps open, as will invite the Enemy to re-enter; by which we alſo hold up a dangerous Treaty, and commerce with Foes that ever ſtudy to deſtroy thoſe hearts that do admit them: For *while Satan has any part there in poſſeſſion, or reverſion, or but a hope to claim by, He will diſturb the whole man; ſo that all his pretenſions muſt be totally aboliſhed, by giving up our whole hearts to God*; and this for our good only, that our carnal warfare may be more eaſie here, by placing our

only joy on Him. And then our Pilgrimage on Earth will end in the fruition of never-fading happineſs in Heaven.

LIX.

TO die is terrible, when we are ſurprized by it; but by frequent Meditations of dying, cuſtom will make it eaſie: For if we believe Heaven to be better then Earth, we muſt believe that we ſhall find better company there, then we converſe with below, and 'tis Death that only can convey us unto them. And if by a Righteous life, with a lively Faith, we can be aſſured in our paſſage through the Grave, that our Souls ſhall taſt ſome degrees of that Eternal Bliſs, with the departed Saints, the moment we expire; can any thing on Earth invite us to ſtay longer here? But our frailty is ſuch, that we generally make that the leaſt buſineſs of our life, for which our life is given us; and is really the only conſiderable object, fit for our continual thoughts, ſo to love and ſerve God here, that we may be capable of dwelling with him for ever in Heaven, and in that hope go chearful to Him, when He calls for us.

LX.

LX.

A *Regenerate man, in his higheſt Divine courſe of life, may be aſſaulted, and diverted by ſuch ſurprizing temptations, as he cannot at firſt ſight ſo reſiſt, and reject*, but that Satan may purſue, until he drives a Regenerate Soul from all its Out-works, into its Cittadel in Heaven; where God does never fail to give ſuch powerful Aids, as make the invading Enemy retire and vaniſh.

LXI.

LEt a long habitual ſinner that repents, manifeſt his converſion to himſelf, by frequent ſincere retirements with God, and then ſet his whole heart to raiſe and fix his collected thoughts on things above! which will create a delight in the Lord, more then in all his Creatures; and by ſuch cuſtom, he will grow to grudge all time as loſt, that diverts him from the pleaſant converſation of this new-gain'd acquaintance with his gracious God; who alſo likes to have him wholly to Himſelf, (when he deſires

to be ſo:) and when this Convert doth obtain grace to arrive at this felicity of favour here, he cannot reſt ſo, but will raiſe his ambitious Zeal to ſuch pure Love, as to hunger and thirſt after the ſight of God's face in Glory. For *if thus enlightned by the Holy Spirit, his Faith will increaſe, and cheriſh ſuch Divine flames with joy and gratitude, as the ſureſt marks of his Reconciliation, and Adoption*; and will encourage him to proceed with vigour in his Advance towards Heaven.

LXII.

DO nothing in private in God's ſight, that thou dareſt not do in the view of all the World, and own at the day of Judgment; and keep this reſolution ever in thy mind, and conſtantly pray for Grace to do ſo, by which thou wilt avoid many ſins.

LXIII.

THere is nothing more deceitfully prejudicial to a new converted ſinner, then to believe himſelf a favourite of Gods, upon his firſt ſerious thoughts and inclination

tion to Piety, with ſome light flaſhes of Spiritual joys in Devotion; (which novelty) an habitual ſinner miſtakes for a poſſeſſion of Heaven, at firſt ſight, and in too much haſt, thinks himſelf an Adopted Son: which time and perſeverance can only make legitimate; and muſt alſo be tryed by a nice and ſerious examination of our hearts, ſuch as is ſeldom underſtood by new Converts; who may rejoyce to find they have diſcarded ſome preſumptuous ſins, and yet be far from a juſt pretence, and title to a place in Heaven. (For inſtance,) a man may reſolve well, and pray with zealous ſincerity, repent too with ſighs and tears, and have a great proportion of Faith, Hope, and Charity, with Humility alſo; but if *he want the true Chriſtian purity of heart, the reſt will not prove a full acceptable Sacrifice to God*, who only ſets his ſeal on our whole hearts reſigned unto Him. So that if we keep a reſerve but of one corner for unlawful diverſions, to beſtow on our fellow Creatures, or on carnal ſinful appetites, all the reſt will not be accepted, for God will admit of no ſharer, nor endure competitors. So then, we are to conſider, *if the value of ſuch a ſmall reſerve*,

reſerve, be worth the loſing of the whole purchaſe we pretend to; and next, what kind of Salvation it would be, if God deal with us accordingly! if He ſhould accept of ſo much of our hearts, as we are pleaſed to ſpare Him, and leave the remaining reſerved part for Satan. For though God deſigns a full perfect Eternal happineſs unto all that give their whole hearts to him, and affords his Divine guiding Light, with power to find the way to Heaven, for all thoſe who pray to be ſo guided with ſincerity and Faith; yet the ſmoak of our parcel Sacrifices from our divided hearts, will not aſcend half way to Heaven.

LXIV.

IF we believe there is ſo great joy, and happineſs in Heaven; why are we ſo lazie, and cold in our approaches thither! why do we not prefer that glorious Crown of Immortality, before the periſhing Goods of this World! for which, our hearts can have no reſt until obtain'd; which is a ſad conſideration, to think how we neglect our greateſt concern, by delaying our reconciliation to God,

God, as if time were at our disposse either to recall, or adjourn, and do not consider how every moment that we carelesly misspend, carries us on to our last step into the Grave, and our first step into Eternity; but if we did think frequently, and seriously of Heaven as we ought, and that the Grave is the way thither, we should not dread Death as we do, nor fear to go, where we desire to be: but such Holy Valour, does only belong to Righteous men, and not to habitual sinners.

LXV.

MAny men *fear to die, because they are better acquainted with this World, then the next*; which they want Faith for, or else are loth to part from their beloved sins, and fear God's anger for such crimes as they fear God's anger for, yet will run that risque, rather then forsake their sins, until they die. Though all men know, that the *best way to triumph o're the Grave, is to live so well, as ever to have in mind the two Eternities of Bliss and Torments; to one of which Death conveys us.* So that it is no wonder if we trem-

tremble at the ſight of Death, when we prepare not for it, by conſidering, that every moment leads us on to what we ſo much dread, and yet ſo much neglect! And alſo men ſhould conſider that the youngeſt, and moſt healthy do ſtand every minute on the brink of Eternity, to perſwade them to be ready for their ſummons thither: So that unleſs we want Faith in Chriſt's merits, and doubt God's promiſes, that if we become ſo truly Pious, as to love God ſo much above all his Creatures, that we cannot fear to part with them, to go to Him. *So that nothing can more concern mankind, then frequent thoughts of our preparation to ſtep into our Eternity*, when we all know there is no true Reſt, but that which is Eternal. Is it not then great folly, to know that we cannot live ever here, and muſt be gone for ever, and yet do ſtill ſet our hearts on theſe moments, and prefer them before that for ever! thus to fear petty troubles here, and not be at all concerned for endleſs Torments! and this for want of thinking ſeriouſly, that we carry Immortal Souls within us, and ſhould have Immortal Aims, and Immortal Ends; when we conſider that our

Eter-

Eternity begins with our Birth, and we that moment do begin to die, and ſo are dying until we are dead, and gone for ever; which words (FOR EVER) ought to ring ever in our ears, to mind us to live ever ready for that *For Ever*; which will make us not to fear death, when we conſider, *that we have a merciful God, who when mans converſion begins, His diſpleaſure* makes a period: So that 'tis want of Piety and Faith, that makes us fear to die.

LXVI.

IF *we believe all we have, that is good, does come from God; we ought in all our enjoyments, to give Him continual thanks, ſo to keep up our hearts to Heaven, by a conſtant gratitude, which is as acceptable as prayers*; and the pious uſe of his Creatures, and daily Bleſſings, we ſhall find a double delight in all the good things we receive from God's hand, becauſe we do enjoy Him in them; and ſhall avoid all ſuch evils, as we dare not own to come from God: And if we conſider that *our lives here, are only to make our journey to Heaven; we cannot have a better*

better Guide thither, then the Holy Ghoſt, who will never miſlead them, who deſire to be guided by Him; and from whom we ſhall get ſuch a habit of Holineſs, as will bring us to ſuch an intimate acquaintance with Chriſt, as will in a ſhort time wean us ſo much from the Love of this World, as to be chearfully ready to die; when we ſee that the end of our journey is, God's call to take poſſeſſion of the Crown of Glory, prepared for us.

LXVII.

A *Pious man, that lives ever ready to die*, has a continual proſpect of his glorious Reſurrection, and can have no greater happineſs on Earth, *then his inward aſſurance of being one of God's Elect*, who, Chriſt ſays, ſhall ſit on his right hand in Heaven, when the Reprobate are caſt down into Everlaſting flames.

LXVIII.

IT is ſaid in Scripture, that *when Jacob found God was ſo near him*, he was afraid; which may teach us, that no man ought

ought to think himself fit for a familiar acquaintance with his great Maker, such as to remove the reverential fear, that is due unto so high and supreme a Majesty; and yet we may believe, and find that His Kingdom of Grace is already come, and is amongst us now; so that we may with humble hearts say as *Jacob* did, *Surely the Lord is in this place, and in our hearts too, when we are led by his Holy Spirit to study Him*; and can fully consider, that though all our senses are naturally inclined to like, and covet varieties of all sorts, and that our busie fancies are as readily subservient to work the same way, and as eagerly do pursue the various desires of every appetite, though we every day find that all objects do by fruition soon decay, and cloy our highest desires that are not Rooted in Eternity. How fit is it then to consider this? and how much better it will be to perswade our Immortal Souls to rob our perishing senses of their depending fancies, and imploy them on things above, as far as they can reach towards the glorious Habitation of God; where such objects are as Immortal as our Souls are, and where our variety of joys will in-

creaſe by ſuch fruitions as never fade, but will grow and multiply the more for gathering, ſo as to be ever filling our hearts with high delights, but yet never ſo full, but ſtill to admit of more and more felicity as our deſires riſe, until we reach the Fountain of Eternal Bliſs, where our Souls will be repleniſhed with Celeſtial joys, but never ſo to overflow as to be weary of them. And thus we may be as happy, as *Jacob* was, *if we can perſwade our hearts to throw out Satan, with all his diſguiſed flattering Troops, and entertain the Holy Ghoſt as chearfully as we have indulged our blind affections*, that led us on towards our Eternal ruine: And when we have thus diſcarded Gods Enemies as our own, we muſt approach *His glorious Majeſty with fear and trembling*, though we do adore, and worſhip Him at the ſame time with comfort.

LXIX.

IF we did well conſider of dying, and the joy our Souls will have as they expire, when reconciled to God before that hour comes, it will be ample recompence for our whole lives ſpent in his ſervice, and is

wor

worthy of our continual Meditation, and devotion to prepare for ſo immenſe a mercy to penitent ſinners; ſuch as will turn the terrours of the Grave into a joyful aſſurance of a bleſſed Reſurrection to Glory; beyond which, no man can fancy a concern fitter for his thoughts to work on, and his utmoſt endeavours to obtain of God; who never rejects a ſincere heart offer'd up to Him in a daily Sacrifice; which the Pious man never fails to do with delight; and never miſſes of the conſolation he ſeeks at his hour of death, and in his way to it.

LXX.

THe true Idea of Holineſs, *is Divine Love*; which we may judge of, *by entirely reſigning our wills, to the will of God*; and the perfection of Righteouſneſs, is to live a Divine Life; ſuch as takes delight to abhor the crimes we have loved, and to preſs on in our devotions, until we obtain a full Victory over all our carnal paſſions; and by worthy receiving the Holy Sacrament, to fix and confirm our Chriſtianity, on the aſſurance we find by a lively Faith, (thus qualified)

to live ever ready for our call unto Eternal Bliſs, which may be the next minute, and cannot be too often thought on by thoſe who love God, and deſire his Love, on whoſe free mercy our Eternity depends.

LXXI.

WE may flatter our ſelves with a miſtaken belief of Holineſs, which we have not, and we may abuſe the World, with a diſguiſed ſhew of Holineſs, which we know we have not; but when Death comes, ſuch Vizards vaniſh, and our hearts will be diſplay'd in their true colours, to our ſelves and others. So that *the beſt marks for Regenerate men to know themſelves by, is ſtrictly to obſerve, if they love God with their whole hearts*, with an univerſal delight therein; that is, with thankful hearts to praiſe his holy Name, to fear, obey, worſhip, and truſt in Him with ſuch a lively Faith, and clear affection, as to be ever ready to forſake all we have in this World, and chearfully to breath our Souls into God's boſom, when He calls for them: And whoever ſhall obtain this Treaſure of Grace to find

these marks in himself, will have such a proportion of that joy, and that glory, as will encourage him to persevere in Righteousness, until he arrives at God's Eternal Rest; where such blessed Souls desire to be, who do know no diversions so delightful here on Earth, as a daily preparation for Heaven.

LXXII.

TO *think, and try, are two small words of great consequence*; because that man who will not think, or dares not think what he has done, or what he is doing, or what he intends to do, is in a sad condition; for he can neither confess his sins, nor repent, nor forsake, nor ever hope for a pardon for them, while he neither thinks, nor trys to learn to think of his Eternity. He is past cure, without a miracle of mercy for his conversion; which is seldom afforded to such stubborn hearts as will not think, nor ever try to think seriously of their Salvation, before it be too late.

LXXIII.

NO *Chriſtian in his ſenſes, will own to love God's Creatures, better then we love Him*; yet we do it, and ſee it not; that is, not obſerve how often, and how long we lay God aſide, to enjoy them; for nothing can take us from God, but what we love better. And though there is no felicity to be compared to Piety, nor any diverſions ſo delightful as Devotion, when we love God, and ſerve him with ſincerity; yet we mind it not enough, that mind it moſt; too much, no man can.

LXXIV.

WE are naturally apt to cozen our ſelves, with thinking we believe what we do not believe, and for want of due conſideration of all our ways, we run on in ſuch undiſcernible errors, as muſt offend God, while we think we ſerve him beſt; and this, by indulging many kinds of innocent diverſions, until they become crimes. though we know that vain and idle thoughts, do often grow

grow to foul ſuggeſtions, which pious men ſhould therefore not admit of.

LXXV.

WE *are often miſled, by thinking too much of what may be, and too little of what muſt be; in providing too much for our uncertain hope of living from year to year, with too little regard to our aſſured death that muſt come*; as if our moments here, were of more value then our Eternity in Heaven; though we do know that nothing in this World is worthy to entertain our Immortal Souls with true delight, but by making ready to go unto God with chearful hearts; of which, few men do think enough, and none can think too much, becauſe it is the greateſt felicity that our Piety can reach, and a ſure mark that the Holy Ghoſt is working in us; which no habitual ſinner is capable of.

LXXVI.

NO man can want a ſubject for Meditation, nor have a more uſeful entertainment, than frequently, and ſe-

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riouſly to conſider, and examine his own life, by recollecting what mercies, what bleſſings, and deliverances he has had from God; and to enquire of his own heart, how little obedience, gratitude, and love he has return'd; *what vows made in ſickneſs, dangers, and in times of trouble, but never kept.* And above all, to conſider how often God has *knocked at our hearts for entrance*, and been denied, or delayed, to admit of ſome more pleaſing Gueſt; or whenever permitted to enter, *how coldly received, and ſlightly treated*, until thruſt out again, to make room for ſome darling ſin, that muſt be welcomed. This, if fully conſidered, may bring us to a ſenſe of our offences, and ſhame to think how unfit we are for our Death-beds, and Eternity to come, with the amazing terrors, to think how we can call on our ſo much offended God for mercy, which He could never prevail with us to accept of; *and what hope then, can ſuch inſolent contemners of God, have in their laſt day?* But on the contrary, this Meditation will bring comfort to a Regenerate man, *who has entertain'd Chriſt in a chearful heart*, with ſincere integrity, to ſuch a joyful truſt

in

in God's love, by his fixed Faith, that no carnal affections can remove his tranſports for Heaven; the expectation whereof is delightful to him, above the terrors of death to leſſen.

LXXVII.

THe ſum of all the great Leſſons we can learn, is to ſhew, that a faithful penitent ſinner, who is become ſo Regenerate as to forſake all his iniquities, *and can perform an univerſal obedience to all God's Laws, with ſuch Evangelical ſincerity as to make a total reſignation of himſelf, with all his Intereſts, into God's hands, muſt be led by the Spirit of God*; which will keep up his heart to Heaven, in a conſtant concern for God's favour, where Satan dares not appear to tempt, when he ſees us ſo united unto Chriſt; and this will bring a Penitent to *endure his Pilgrimage through all the ſtorms of this World*, and defend him from the glittering vanities alſo, ſo as to know no fear, nor joy, to interrupt his expectation of Heaven, and the happy hour to breath out his Soul into the Boſom of God; which holy ambition, will entertain his heart

heart here, with more preſent happineſs, than all the Worlds wealth can afford to a wilful habitual ſinner.

LXXVIII.

[*A Prayer.*]

"LOrd, I beſeech thee, let thy Holy "Spirit direct my prayers in my ap- "proaches to thy Throne of Mercy, and "there pray within me, that ſo guided, "I may find grace from Heaven, to ſup- "port me in my paſſage out of this "World, unto thy habitation of Eternal "Bliſs. And now wean me from longer "wandering in the vain Labyrinths, and "Glories here, by having ever in mind, "that all the greatneſs, and various "pleaſures I have ſeen, and ſhared in, "are vaniſhed like a Dream; and there- "by find, that nothing is ſo delightful to "a Regenerate reconciled ſinner, *as a* "*retired habitation, free from the noiſe of* "*Worldly affairs*, where by thy Grace, "peace of conſcience may encourage me "to be ever ready at thy call, O God! "with a joyful heart, to make my laſt "ſtep into the glorious Eternity I hope "for,

"for, by the Merits, and Mediation of "Jeſus Chriſt.

LXXIX.

When the Holy Ghoſt dwells in our hearts, we ſhall find new principles of a Divine Nature, producing there an univerſal Victory over all our carnal appetites, and an univerſal obedience to all God's Laws, with truſt in his Providence, and ſuch Faith in Chriſt's Merits, and Interceſſion, as will aſſure us of all God's promiſes, as if now actually in our poſſeſſion; from whence will ariſe continual comforts, with hearty gratitude for ſuch love and mercy to penitent ſinners. And by this firſt Reſurrection from Sin to Grace, be aſſured of our ſecond to Glory; *ſo that to be thus ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, we are united unto Chriſt, brought home to God the Father, as his adopted Children,* and do begin to enter on our everlaſting happineſs even in this World, by our continual Meditations, and Prayers, ſo to raiſe this Holy flame as high as here we can reach, without preſumption; ſo to fix in our hearts the joyful practice of ſuch a Divine Life, and

Divine

Divine Love to God, as will produce Divine joys here, and for ever in Heaven; which no carnal fruitions can attain. *And thus we are led by the Spirit of God, and do become the adopted Sons of God.*

LXXX.

IF the most voluptuous sinners could discern the felicity of an Holy life, what constant elevated joys, the peace of a quiet conscience brings to those who can wean their minds from the fading pleasures, and drudgeries of this World, to fix their hearts on things above, sinners would make haste to become Regenerate. For if we consider right of Eternity, we must know that our Immortal Souls, when freed from the slavish appetites of flesh and bloud, can have no transports like those immortal joys they find, *when settled in their Centre, God's Bosom, from whence they came*; so that our Souls can relish no felicity like the hope of Heaven, nor be much concerned for any thing less then Eternal Bliss; which though of our selves we cannot reach, yet if we give our hearts to God, *we cannot miss it*: But if in contempt of God,

God, we live and die in endleſs ſinning, we may juſtly fear that our Eternity will be in ſcorching flames. We ought alſo to conſider, though God has promiſed pardon unto penitent ſinners, He has not promiſed one hour of Life to repent in; ſince therefore we can neither prevent death, nor foreſee it, let us always expect it as at hand; and prepare for our Eternal Glory in the preſence of God, while we have time to do it.

LXXXI.

MOſt men do ſay, and do believe they love God, and no doubt many good men do, more or leſs; but all mankind ought to enquire into their own hearts, *if they find not more joy in their idle diverſions, then in God's company; if they be not quickly weary of converſing with God, in Meditation and Prayers, haſting to return unto their diverſions, which they love better then Him*; and then conſider the conſequence of ſuch contempts, and how much our ſelves do ſcorn a divided heart, where we love; much more then, doth God deſpiſe thoſe who preſer his Creatures before Himſelf.

LXXXII.

GOD knows our frailties, and doth allow us diverſions, but they muſt be ſuch *as we may own in his ſight, and ſee Him in them*, with grateful hearts for ſuch refreſhments, as Humane Nature does require, and ſuch as we may glorifie his Name in their fruitions: and be ſure not to flatter our ſelves into evil temptations, by our fair-fac'd diverſions too much indulged, leſt they ſting us to death with ſmiles.

LXXXIII.

THere is another kind of happy, and bleſſed diverſions, free from ſinful vanities, and fading glories of the World, which *David* ſo much delighted in, by his retirements to converſe with God, as his Souls chiefeſt joy; and whoever ſeeks God with the like zeal, *no doubt will find Him, as David did*, and be as fully happy as he was in God's eſteem; which is an ambition that does become good Chriſtians, as the beſt diverſions we can have to raiſe our hearts to Heaven.

LXXXIV.

LXXXIV.

MEn ought with great care to watch their diverſions, for we are often betrayed into a neglect of God, even by innocent diverſions, which by cuſtom do inſenſibly engage our hearts to conſent unto evil actions, when we deſign nothing that is ill. So that if we ſerve God as we ought, we ſhall delight to converſe with him in our retirements, and account our holy Meditations of Heaven, to be our moſt pleaſant diverſions; ſo to refreſh our Spirits, when tired with Worldly affairs; and we ſhall find that ſuch Celeſtial diverſions, will be bleſſed with Divine joys, that cannot be ſhaken by Carnal appetites, nor by gliſtering Vanities, when once fixed and ratified by God's reception of us into his Liſt of Adopted Sons; *and then be ſo guided by his Holy Spirit, as to grow higher and higher in his favour, till we participate of his Glory; which inward aſſurance will be a more pleaſant ſubject for our diverſion, then all the Wit, the Wealth, the Honours, and Beauties of this World can entertain our hearts with. And when God dwells thus*

in the Souls of men, it is the moſt raviſhing diverſion we can have, to ſee our ſelves live ready to enter into His Eternal joy, at a minutes warning.

LXXXV.

WHen we approach God with ſincere hearts, there can be no diverſion more delightful then our Souls union with Him; who knows all our wants, all our oppreſſions, and ſees all our concerns whatever; and is as ready to redreſs our grievances, and to bleſs our honeſt endeavours, as we can be to deſire it; which our pious diverſions, above all other diverſions the moſt delightful; ſo that the beſt of idle diverſions, (though innocent) is like warming frozen Vipers in our breaſts, until we give them ſtrength to bite us to death. And if we do obſerve it, we ſhall find, that there is no real eſſential pleaſure in any diverſions, *but in true Devotion*; which the Regenerate man finds to be true.

LXXXVI.

LXXXVI.

WE have two very remarkable motions, fit for frequent consideration, to judge how our hearts stand towards God, and how we may discern his love to us: The first is, to observe if we have more joy in our retired Devotions, then in the fruition, and conversation of his Creatures; in which we cannot be mistaken, if we diligently observe *how his Holy Spirit works in us at those times.* From whence arises the second consideration, to observe how our Souls are elevated by his Divine comforts *descending on us* in such Devotions; which is the best assurance we can have, that we do love God above all his Creatures, and doth also shew *that He sees it, likes it, and rewards us for it*, by his returns of Grace, in giving a delightful perseverance in such sincerity to Him; which is the highest experiment that our frail Natures can make, when we love God so well, as to converse with Him in our humble Addresses, before all Carnal felicities, and can rejoyce to go to Him, when He calls for us.

LXXXVII.

AFter all that has, or can be ſaid, the only way which God himſelf, hath in his Holy Goſpel fixed on, for the exaltation of his Glory, in the forgiveneſs of ſins, is, that all ſinners ſhould come to Him merely upon the account of Grace in the bloud of Chriſt; and not to reſt on, nor ſupport our ſelves with general hopes of mercy, mixed with our endeavours, and obedience; *but to come up to the Goſpel Rule by a fixed Faith in Chriſt*, and make that way our all by giving Glory to God therein *as He hath appointed, leſt we periſh Eternally. For no man ſhall receive pardon and forgiveneſs of ſins, but thoſe who come unto God by the bloud of Chriſt. And the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is only excepted from ſuch forgiveneſs.*

LXXXVIII.

ALl the Arguments we can hear, or read, or fancy to our ſelves, by converſing with God in holy Meditations of Heaven, and Eternal Bliſs in his pre-

preſence there, will not extinguiſh the natural affection between our Souls and Bodies, ſo far as to deſire, or to be willing to have a ſeparation by death; without a miraculous addition of Faith, and Grace, to work beyond the reach of our Nature: though we do believe that the time between our Death, and our Reſurrection, is but a moment to Eternity; and though that moment ſhould laſt an hundred thouſand years, it will be as undiſcernible for its duration, as while we ſleep one minute. So that we muſt be ſatisfied in this myſtery, without farther enquiry; and pray to be contented in that point, to be as happy when we die, as God's departed Saints are, until they and we ariſe together. And *this is great comfort, to know that we ſhall be with them in death, if we do ſincerely endeavour to live and die in God's favour, as they did:* And ſo make ready to go, where we all pretend to deſire to be, when we can ſtay no longer here.

LXXXIX.

WE muſt not entertain Spiritual Pride, nor welcom flattering Enthuſiaſms

thuſiaſms in our devotions, nor attribute ſuch Holineſs to our ſelves as is the immediate gift of God: but we may, nay *we muſt joy, and rejoyce to find the Holy Ghoſt at work within our hearts, to perform our ſelf-denials for us; and to raiſe our Souls to ſuch a felicity here, in our Love to God, and delight in his worſhip, as will give us a taſt of our Eternal Bliſs,* when we ſhall ſee, and enjoy Him as the Angels in Heaven do.

XC.

IT is no wonder to ſee men very devout in a time of danger, ſickneſs, or any other afflictions; but when the Evils are removed, does our gratitude for deliverance juſtifie our Love to God by future obedience? do we in health and proſperity, approach God with the ſame vigour in our Prayers, as in our ſickneſs? For *Souls led by the Spirit of God, are alike devout in all changes; and we being made whole, ought to thank God, and to ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto us.*

XCI.

XCI.

OUr greatest affair in this World, is to make ready to go out of it for ever; becauſe every moment may be our laſt here, and then how diſmal an Eternity are we haſting to! if not reconciled unto God before we die: *this is enough to perſwade us to ſet our hearts on the Love and Service of God, who will never let their devout endeavours be loſt*, that ſeek how to pleaſe Him, when with ſincere affections, they prepare to come unto Him.

XCII.

WHoever finds that the power of Divine Love, with the expectation of Heaven at this diſtance, doth create ſuch joy in his Regenerate heart, as doth bring him to delight in a Divine Life alſo, by his frequent converſation with God in humble ſincere approaches; he will ſoon grow to ſuch a habit of Holineſs, as will raiſe his Faith to foreſee ſome beams of that Cœleſtial Light, which his Soul ſhall ſhine in at the Reſurrection, as a reward of his inward dependance on God here:

And

And if thus *reconciled and led by the Holy Ghoſt, he ſhall alſo find this is a good Antidote to prevent relapſes into ſin*; and thus Armed with Divine joy, he will be ſafe from Carnal temptations, and will have his Soul full of ſuch Heavenly comforts, as will ſweeten all afflictions, and at laſt beget ſuch Holy courage, as will deſtroy the ſting of Death, by living ever ready to die; *for he that can love God above his creatures, will gladly part with them to go to Him.*

XCIII.

LEt *no man boaſt of his own Righteouſneſs, for no man has any, but what is given him from God*; yet let every man rejoyce, and be thankful for ſuch Grace as doth ſanctifie, and enable his Duſt and Aſhes to become Regenerate, and *learn ſo to welcom the Spirit of God in a chearful heart, that he may make it Paradiſe where he is pleas'd to dwell: And then that man's natural corruptions will be refined, and his Body conſecrated into the Temple of God; and by this miracle of mercy, the moſt incarnate ſinner may become an Angel of Light*: but not by his own inherent

inherent Righteouſneſs, but by God's grace and mercy, with Chriſt's Righteouſneſs imparted unto Him.

XCIV.

Amongſt all the great Leſſons we have learnt, Holineſs is moſt worthy of our ſtudy, to ſearch our hearts if we can find there the Goſpel-marks of our Election; for *when God invites us by his Holy Spirit to this ſincere enquiry, He will direct us by his Divine guiding Light, to find, and to feel when we have found the treaſure that we ſeek*; by the comforts that will ſtill grow, until they fill our Souls with ſuch Cœleſtial joy, that we cannot miſs of, nor miſtake what we ſearch for, to aſſure our Election; for God will not be hid from ſuch as he ſees does ſeek Him with their whole hearts, and that do hunger and thirſt after Holineſs; and when we do obtain Grace to diſcern ſuch marks of our Spiritual Filiation, we may in great humility rejoyce, and ſing Hallelujahs unto God with the Angels in Heaven, to ſhew the higheſt Adoration our hearts can expreſs, in gratitude for ſuch mercy afforded unto men on Earth,

And

And *by thus entertaining our ſelves within our ſelves, avoid temptations, and ſet our hearts above the power of all vain objects to divert us from the prime end, and felicity of our Chriſtian calling*; which is our Reſurrection from ſin to grace, as the chief mark of God's favour to aſſure our reconciliation; for Grace accepted, and perſevered in, is the infallible earneſt of Glory; becauſe *Chriſt has made the Kingdom of Grace here, all one with the Kingdom of Glory.* Which is much talked of by many that prepare not for it; becauſe moſt men in health do think themſelves ready to die, and do not find they are not, until the Bell tolls them to their Graves; hoping to jump from Hell to Heaven at once, but the aſcent is high, ſteep, and very hard to climb.

XCV.

THough the great art and myſtery of ſelf-denial, to ſubdue all carnal appetites, is the moſt difficult part of our Chriſtian calling; yet the ſame Holy Spirit that invites us to it, will impower our hearty endeavours, by diligence and cuſtom to gain ſo abſolute a Victory over our Tyrant fancies,

cies, which before enslaved us, as will raise our Souls by constant self-denials, to much greater Spiritual delights even here on Earth, which the Regenerate man can only judge of.

XCVI.

[*A Prayer.*]

O Lord prepare my heart to pray, and bless me with contrition, and repentance proportionable to my sins, that my Love, and my Obedience, may now be as great as my crimes, and my neglects have been; who never thought on Thee in all my ways, nor of my Souls Eternity till now, *being led by thy Holy Spirit to pray for Grace to set my heart continually on Thee, my God; that I may know no joy on Earth, like my humble Addresses unto Thee, in my retirements*; by which I can only judge of my new love, and gratitude, for thus turning of me from mine Iniquities, and by this miracle of Mercy and Grace, hast snatch'd me up from Hell, into this Heavenly prospect of thine Eternal habitation of Glory. Lord let these Divine transports in my ap-

proaches unto Thee, wean me from the World, that the remnant of my days may be ſpent in preparing of my Soul for thy ſummons to Heaven, that the terrors of the Grave may not divert my frail nature from coming with joy unto Thee, my God, when thou art pleaſed to call. And I beſeech thee, *make this Holy flame burn ſtill brighter and brighter, when I draw near to pray, that my heart may melt with joy for this my Reconciliation, and comfortable hope of Eternal happineſs in Heaven; and that I may be ſo ſtrong with Divine valour, as to welcom Death, that only can conduct me thither.*

XCVII.

WHen God *delivers a penitent ſinner from the ſlavery of Satan, to rejoyce in the freedom and felicity of his ſervice, it is to ſhew him a glimpſe of Heaven, to invite him thither.* How great a crime will it then be, for ſuch a man to turn Reprobate again, after ſuch mercy ſhewn!

XCVIII.

XCVIII.

NOthing *does ruine more Souls, then not frequently examining our own hearts ſtrictly, how they ſtand towards God*; and with what ſincere delight we ſerve him, in our Devotions; for the bright flaming zeal of a ſincere ſigh, will pierce Heaven, when luke-warm words uttered aloud, can find no entrance, nor is at all regarded by Almighty God, who allows us to knock hard at Heaven gates for entrance, when our groaning hearts expreſs our deſires; for *He loves to be preſſed with violence for his favours, to ſhew that we value what we pray for.*

XCIX.

ENdeavour above all things, while thy Soul is in communion with God, to keep thy affection up to Him, and ſtrive not ſo much for long eloquent language, as to be heart-wounded, in thy Petitions, for when thy Devotion flags, thy Prayer is done. *We ought always to pray, as if we were that moment to die, which will keep our hearts intent on the great work we are*

about; And he that in praying, can adorn his ſorrow for paſt ſins, with penitential tears, before he parts from God, will waſh them off, with tears of joy, for that ſorrow.

C.

THere is nothing in our view more deſtructful to the Souls of men, then the falſe opinion, that Chriſtianity does impoſe ſlaviſh Laws upon us; as if Piety only conſiſted in heavy burthens, to be poor miſerable dejected Cyphers in the World, made up for ſorrows, and ſufferings, with ſelf-denial vows againſt all humane natural fruitions, and felicities; For moſt men being bred up in theſe miſtaken prejudices, cannot eaſily be perſwaded, that the true Chriſtian Goſpel Rules for a Spiritual life, does exceed thoſe carnal appetites we ſo much ſtruggle for, and the Regenerate man as much deſpiſes; in compariſon of his Souls continual feaſting on the expectation of Heaven, whoſe firm belief of his Eternal joy, as an adopted Son of God, is a felicity above all the fading enjoyments this World can afford the moſt ambitious,

ous, luxurious perſon, who has all that his heart can wiſh that way. So that *no man can have a more chearful Soul, then he whoſe faith in Chriſt, and truſt in God, makes participate of all the lawful pleaſures this World affords*; and when piouſly uſed, is a delight far above what the wicked can pretend to, when the terrors of an evil conſcience muſt imbitter his fruitions. And this no man can ſo well judge of, as a converted ſinner, become Regenerate, who has taſted, and forſaken the moſt voluptuous pleaſures this World has, for the preſent joys his Soul finds by Faith in his Eternal Bliſs; which ſhews that *a good Chriſtian lives more pleaſantly in this World, then a vitious man can do.*

CI.

WHen *Chriſt has wrought his great miracle of Converſion in the hearts of the moſt obdurate ſinners, thoſe near loſt men*, by his grace becoming truly Regenerate; *ſuch Evangelical ſincerity will grow in their hearts towards God, as to take more pleaſure in his ſervice, then all their paſt carnal fruitions did afford them*:

So that whoever is enriched with this Grace, will find Divine comforts in their retirements to be alone with God, such as will beget Heavenly Raptures, and preserve their hearts the whole day after from Satanical assaults; and by the custom of such early Morning exercise, will in time beget an habitual delight to begin the day with God, and never forget those high Ejaculations, until they meet the Lord again, to renew and confirm their commerce for Heaven. But it is no wonder, that men generally great sinners, are so hard to be converted, because they cannot set a true value on what they understand not; But most wretched those, who have been thus enlightned, and for some moments rais'd to Heaven; yet are so frail by nature, and by custom prone to evil, as to forsake these Seraphick joys, and return to sordid Earthly fruitions, rather then continue in the assured everlasting joys of Heaven; by persevering in that Righteousness, which they have tasted, and like not.

CII.

CII.

THough *David* did commit ſome great faults, he was a man after God's own heart after that, and one of the beſt patterns in Holy Writ, fit for us to imitate; for his love, and gratitude to God, who by cuſtom grew to ſuch a pious friendſhip with his great Maker, *that much of his life was ſpent with God alone in his retirements, with whom he conſulted all his affairs, made all his complaints to, and humbly begged whatever his needs were, with ſuch a familiar truſt in God, as his only ſupport, and only delight:* So that if we now conſider *David's* great affairs, as a King, full of troubles, ever in Wars, though glorious by his Atchievements, yet in frequent dangers, vexed by a ſtubborn People hard to govern, beſides the diſorders of his own Family; *ſo that we may think he omitted no opportunity to be with God*; that hath left ſo many Pſalms full of ſuch high Divine Raptures, extant, to manifeſt his great piety; that it is a wonder he could get ſo much time for ſo many prayers, praiſes, and contemplations. By which we may learn, that in what

what calling ſo ever God has ſet us, and what troubles ſo ever He appoints for us, *we may find time to converſe with God by day, and night.* So that if we repent, confeſs, and forſake our ſins, with hearts as fervent towards God, as *David* did, no doubt we ſhall be as well received, though neither Kings, nor Prophets. We may alſo call to mind, that *David*, as the leaſt conſiderable perſon of his Family, had the loweſt imployment, to keep his Fathers Sheep; *yet his heart was then ſet high on God, or he might have been devoured by that Lion, or that Bear he ſlew, if God had not been with him. And we may alſo think, that he was better acquainted with God at his Flock, then* Saul *was on his Throne*; elſe he had not eſcaped *Saul's* furious malice, and ſo ſoon aſcended that Throne. *By which we may ſee, that the greateſt King, and meaneſt man, may learn of* David, *to love, ſerve, honour, worſhip, and truſt in God, with ſuch a delight, as will grow to a friendſhip with his Creator, and raiſe his Soul up unto Heaven, whatſoever his imployment on Earth is*; and thoſe hours, and years of our life, which we trifle away, as a burthen to be rid of, not knowing how to ſpend idly enough,

we

we may imploy as *David* did, *and never be alone, when most alone.* Thus we may enjoy a happy, and bleſſed ſecurity on Earth; and have a true courage above all ſuch accidents as make ill men tremble. *And thus a pious man enjoys a preſent communion with God, and Chriſt, by a lively Faith, to ſuch a degree, as doth aſſure his Soul of Eternal Bliſs in Heaven; and when Satan finds us always in ſuch company, he will have ſmall hopes to get an Audience for his Addreſſes to deſtroy us.* So that if we can live thus like *David*, we may hope to die in God's favour like him; and as chearfully reſign our Souls into God's hands, who loves us more then we can love him; and though we cannot reach *David's* higheſt perfections, as an inſpired Prophet, we may like him, give continual thanks to God for all we have, and ſing praiſe, honour, and glory to his Holy Name, whoſe mercy endureth for ever.

CIII.

Did men watch the deceitfulneſs of ſin, and would heartily check the firſt appearance of evil thoughts, with the remembrance

membrance that our All-seeing God is ever present, to observe if we do fight, or do invite our long known Enemies, to their accustomed conquest of us; such precautions would make us either fear to offend, or joy to please our God, and would soon teach our careless hearts, how to subdue those Tyrant appetites afar off, which so often do enslave us, when permitted to approach at a nearer distance; *who do hold such a natural intelligence within*, that if we but admit a Parley to Treat with those subtle Enemies, they will with fair pretences lead us on, until they undermine our Souls, and blow us up before we can discern the danger we are in; and when once entred at such a Breach, 'tis then too late to grapple with a Foe that is in possession of a Fort without resistance gained. Yet this sad truth by long experience taught, is seldom learnt, because we too much love those glistering Fetters, and consent to put them on before they be imposed; and then fear to be too soon freed from such a pleasant Bondage, vainly thinking we can at our own pleasure shake such shackles off, and be at liberty, until surprized by some unlook'd-for Doom, from whence is no redemption.

CIV.

CIV.

A Frequent examination of our hearts, is of use to keep men close up to Godliness, and some Rules are very necessary to examine our hearts by, to know when we walk aright, as well to check remissness; as to cherish those Divine motions which do raise hearts up to Heaven, and may keep them there, when so raised; which is a great assurance for flesh and bloud when converts; and will beget a joyful hope of being received into God's Bosom, *when become so Regenerate as to find a sincere delight to dwell there*; which is a great degree of blessedness, and a good assurance that we shall be so for ever in the next World. *What labour then, or what time spent can be too much, to obtain Grace to become so universally cleansed from sin, and universally obedient to Gods commands, as will produce a total resignation of our selves, and all our Interests into Gods hands, and keep our hearts close up to Heaven, until we arrive there? For when God is the prime object of our Souls desire, we shall take all opportunities to retire from the World, to converse with God in humble*

Addresses

Addreſſes for our Eternal habitation with Him in Glory. But if this Duty of Meditation be uſed as a ſervile Drudgery, to avoid a Rod held over us; we are not right at heart, and far from being Regenerate, far from loving God, if we take no delight in being with him; for though Humane Nature cannot reach to Angelical Holineſs, yet Evangelical ſincerity may be acquired by the Divine aſſiſtance, if rightly ſought! *and then, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are become the Sons of God*; beyond which, no man can wiſh, nor think; and when this ſtate of Bliſs is obtained, with what diligence ought we to keep it up to the higheſt pitch of love and gratitude that our fancy, and our Faith can reach; *for by ſuch emanations from the Holy Ghoſt, we may judge of Gods love to us*, and thereby gueſs what immenſe Glory we ſhall have in Heaven. *And thus we may daily feaſt our Souls with Angels food, if we can converſe with God aright*: So that to be Regenerate, multiplies our joys here, and aſſures our happineſs in Heaven; and though no man can of himſelf attain to this ſtate of Grace, without the Divine aſſiſtance; it is never denied, if ſincerely begged; nor was

ever

ver given in vain to deceive any man, in the point of being Regenerate.

CV.

WE have no better way to expreſs our love and gratitude to God, for all his Mercies and Bleſſings, then by our ſelf-denyals: For, our obedience to his Laws is duty, and no virtue to forbear a ſin that we take no delight in; but to crucifie a beloved darling Luſt, rather then offend God by it; that is ſelf-denyal: *And unto whomſoever God gives grace to do ſo, he gives a joyful ſatisfaction to his Soul for ſo great a victory, as lays a firm foundation to raiſe his Thoughts to Heaven on*: And is a good argument to ſhew that he fears Gods Threats, and truſts in his Promiſes, as the greateſt Teſtimony of an active Faith ſo much required; *And when all this is done, our Chriſtian Warfare is not done*; For when Carnal ſins do ceaſe, and our Appetites are overcome by Grace, Satan ſtill purſues, in hope to fruſtrate the felicity of our Converſion, by diſturbing our Piety with Spiritual Pride, or ſome Enthuſiaſms, to reduce us into his power again. *So that*

when we are beſt, we muſt Watch and Pray moſt, for ſupplies of Grace to enable us to fight on, leſt we end worſe then we begun. The ſum of all that can be taught, is to bring men to Godlineſs and Honeſty; which is the perfection of Chriſtianity.

CVI.

IT is ſaid in Scripture, *That without holineſs, no man ſhall ſee the Lord*; By which we may obſerve, that Gods Injunctions are deſigned for mans greateſt Happineſs; becauſe Holineſs is certainly our only true Felicity in this World; and cannot be leſs in the next. *For if by Righteouſneſs and Faith, we may ſee a glimpſe of Gods Glory here*; We ſhall ſee him in fulneſs of Glory at the Reſurrection; and enjoy him too on Chriſts account.

CVII.

NO man did ever ſeek God with a ſincere heart, that miſſed to find him; God loves to be ſo ſought, and to be ſo found, as we ſhall be ſure we have found him by our delight in him: All which is the work of the Holy Ghoſt within us, to our great com-

comfort here, always to enjoy God, if our delight be ſet on him! above all earthly fruitions. And thus we may find God, and enjoy him as well in Courts of Princes, as in a Wilderneſs, if we prefer nothing before the finding of him; and ſo the greateſt Courtiers may live like Saints on Earth, and be Saints in Heaven when they die.

CVIII.

'Tis not amiſs for a Righteous man ſometimes to fancy himſelf on his Death-Bed, with his Friends bewailing his departure from them; while he pities their miſtake, who pities him, that is going to ſee the face of God, in the face of Death; and to meet Chriſt, who with open Arms comes to receive his Soul into his Eternal reſt; *Such Meditations will raiſe our hearts to endeavour to die ſo, and will bring us great Conſolation while we live ſo, in Gods favour, that our Faith fail not at the laſt gaſp.*

CIX.

THere is no Felicity like Piety, no Peace, no Security, no Converſation, *no diverſions can come into competition with a Divine Life, and Divine Love to God*; So to fix our Intereſt in this world, and the next; for we ſhall fall as we live, and ſhall riſe to everlaſting Judgment as we fall; *For though Chriſt came into the world to call, and to enable the greateſt of ſinners to become capable of this Felicity here, and Salvation after*; We muſt repent and forſake our Iniquities, or can have no part in him.

CX.

WE cannot make too ſtrict a Covenant with our Eyes and Hearts to watch the deceitfulneſs of Sin; And obſerve how every look, and every thought, is naturally apt inſenſibly to convert innocent intentions, into evil; before we diſcern the ſubtle enemy undermining of our Souls, with the fair appearances of harmleſs diverſions, if too much indulged! until they become deſtroying Snares.

CXI.

CXI.

GOd often treats his profeſſed Lovers, as we do one another, when we find that a profeſſed friend has ſome concealed Jewel that he prizes above his profeſſions, though he offer up all the reſt which we deſire not; we reject his Complement, and ſtill deſire to have that reſerved beloved Jewel which he values above our Favours. And ſo God rejects all our Complemental Services, *until our reſerved darling Luſt be offered up to him*, as the Jewel we moſt prize, and the only ſacrifice he will accept; *Then in return, of our whole hearts, he will give himſelf to us for ever.*

CXII.

LEt him that thinks he ſtands moſt fixed in Heaven, take heed leſt he fall; and remember that *David* and *Solomon*, (both of them Gods Favorites) could not ſtand longer then by his Grace ſupported; nor were our Saviours beloved Diſciples, all free from ſtumbling, by which, and many more examples, we are

taught not to presume on our own righteousness; but to look on our Frailties as inherent to us, lest Dust and Ashes should presume on our own performances, without continual Addresses to God for such Supplies as we do every moment need. And we may also think that God permits some good men to some relapses, to awaken, and quicken them to the frequent duty of his Worship, so to own him, that no man may hope to serve him as he ought, without him. For Satan is most busie and ambitious to reduce a Convert out of Christs flock, to become his slave again; rather then to continue his Celestial freedom; such a victory he accounts his Master-piece, so to subdue careless men, who too much trust unto their own Integrity, and take no heed how they stand, lest they fall.

CXIII.

WE cannot Pray too often, because frequent sincere Prayers do bring down Blessings from Heaven; but when we make negligent Addresses, they shew such a disrespect, that the Glorious Majesty we approach, turns from us, in

in contempt of ſuch careleſs Petitions. *For when we are excited to Divine Worſhip by the Holy Ghoſt, God looks for ſuch intention of Spirit, with vigour in our Devotion, that ſhews how much we value what we pray for*; He admits of our frequent zeal at all times, though he ſees our unworthineſs, and never fails to cheriſh an humble contrite Spirit, when he rejects a preſumptuous Babbler. So that when we approach to Pray, our firſt Petition ſhould be, for Grace to prevent all diverſions from Satan, and our ſelves, who where his publick temptations fail, is ever buſie to diſturb our Devotions with frivolous or foul ſuggeſtions.

CXIV:

HOw can we think that God doth believe the frequent Profeſſions we make, that we love Him above all things, when we forſake him ſo often for trivial, and vain fruitions? for though no man is free from ſuch Frailties, as we ought to Watch, and Pray for amendment of by Grace from above! For to be abſolutely perfect, is impoſſible, becauſe our Nature will not admit of ſuch Angelical per-

perfection; yet no man ought to queſtion his ſincerity, becauſe he cannot do, that which is impoſſible for men to do.

CXV.

WE ſpend much of our time in laying foundations for Happineſs on Earth; when our Happineſs is, that we have none here, but what we can raiſe from our Hopes to find in Heaven; which we are ſeldom inclined to think on, but when we find we are not ſo well provided for here, as we Hope to be there.

CXVI.

ALl men know that every moment of our Lives, every ſtep we make, does advance us towards the Grave; but we do not ſeriouſly enough conſider of this our greateſt concern, while we march on with merry hearts towards our Eternal Habitation of Reſt, and happineſs in Heaven; (as we think) but in our careleſs journey thither, do entertain our Souls with ſuch worthleſs Vanities, or ſuch known Wickedneſs, for our Diverſions;

verſions; that we do often miſtake the way, if not quite loſe it, and ſo arrive at a diſmal Habitation of Woe, before we ſee whither we are going.

CXVII.

WE cannot Love, or Fear God too much, we cannot Thank Him, or Truſt in Him too much, nor Think of Him too often, from whom we have all that we enjoy, and on whoſe free Mercy our Eternal Doom depends; and this Moment may be that Doom to every one of us. *So then he is the moſt Happy man in this World, that Lives ever the moſt ready to Die*; With a ſincere deſire to be with God; which is a ſure mark of his Reconciliation, and Adoption; *To love God thus, and to be thus beloved of Him, will bring us to delight in God above all his Creatures, which is the higheſt Felicity our Piety can aim at.*

CXVIII.

[*A Prayer.*]

LOrd Enrich all Hearts with Divine Love, that deſire it, and inflame their.

their Souls with ſuch defires towards Thee, as to Live Righteouſly, *and to value ſuch enlightning Comforts as flow from thoſe Tranſports thou doeſt afford unto Reconciled ſinners*, become Regenerate; ſo to encourage them to Inform, and Reclaim ſuch as go Aſtray, by ſeeing the vaſt delights that do attend thine Adopted Sons, in their way to Heaven; *And by that bright Light from above*, to judge of thy Celeſtial Joys prepared for them there.

CXIX.

NOt to think at all, is impoſſible, and to think too much of what we ought not to think of, is too Natural to us; but to think of the Everlaſting Torments in Hell, comparatively with our petty ſhort Pains here, will Fright us into ſome Care not to offend God ſo, as to ſend us thither: *But to think of the Joys of Heaven as we ought, and by our Faith in Chriſt to bring us thither; with our Love to God, our Chriſtian Charity, our Purity of Heart, and our Humility to God and Man*; Which is the Divine Lovers part, who is ever thinking on his Eternal

nal Bliſs, and how to pleaſe God moſt, ſo to prepare for Heaven, which he ſees every moment is at hand; and the joyful expectation of that Happy Hour, is his Souls continual Conſolation; as thoſe will find, who do Sincerely labour for it.

CXX.

IT is one of the Devils chief Arts, to cheat men into a belief that it is a Melancholly thing to be Religious; *But a man truly Regenerate, will need no other arguments to convince the contrary, then what he finds in his own Heart of Delight, when the Holy Ghoſt has taken poſſeſſion there; and when his Retirements with God, will furniſh him ſo fully with his Loving Kindneſs, and thoſe Enlightning Gifts, thoſe Beatifying Graces, and Refreſhing Comforts, thoſe Divine Manifeſtations of his preſence, creating ſuch a Joy, with ſuch Peace of Conſcience, that no Carnal Appetites, nor all the Malice of Men and Devils, can remove him from his firm Station of Bliſs, which he participates of in this proſpect of Heaven only.* But no man can believe this, nor gueſs at the Felicity of a Pious Life, until he do obtain Grace to become Regenerate.

CXXI.

CXXI.

WHoever conſiders that his day of Death, is his day of Judgment, for his Eternal Being; will find that his time yet to Live, is little enough to ask God Pardon for the time he has miſpent; Whoever doth cloſely and ſeriouſly ſet to this great work of Converſion, will find that his Sighs and Tears, will produce more Joy in his Latter-days, then re-acting his former Crimes would be, when the two Eternities are put into the Scales.

CXXII.

LEt us not pleaſe our ſelves with preſumptuous Thoughts, *That we are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, till we have examined our Hearts ſtrictly, to find if we are free from all Habitual Sins, in Thought, Word, and Deed; for God will not dwell in a Pollated Temple: We muſt next examine what proportion of Divine Joy, the Holy Spirit fills our New Hearts with, to Confirm, and Sanctify our Souls, in the Love, and Service of God, thus dwelling in us;*

and

And then obſerve, what a new kind of entertainment it is, to Delight in God, with the peace of a quiet Conſcience; which by frequent Meditations, will hold us up above the reach of any ſtorms, that Satan can raiſe, or the malice of Men can contrive againſt us; And then we are to fix all this Happineſs, by worthy receiving of the Holy Sacrament, *So as Chriſt may be Born within us, and be ſo United unto us, as to confirm our Spiritual Filiation: Thus qualified, we may look on our ſelves as Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*; In all humility rejoycing to be ſo Bleſſed, when we are ſo.

CXXIII.

WE ought to enter Caveats in our Hearts, againſt the approaches of ſuch ſorts of Temptations as we fear moſt, and on all occaſions, to ſearch the Regiſter of our Vows made to God; to ſee if we do not ſtand pre-ingaged to Him, to reſiſt the Temptation then Aſſaulting us; and if ſo, how unworthy ſhall we be ſo to break our Word with God, upon Record; and how dangerous to provoke his anger by ſuch a Contempt; thus we may

deſtroy many deſigns from Satan, and our ſelves oftentimes the worſe Devil of the two.

CXXIV.

WE are too often abuſed by flattering diverſions, *as if Holy Meditations were not more pleaſant, and more durable, then vain delights*; Which rob us of our real Eſſential Joys, for ſhadows of Pleaſures, that ever abuſe us.

CXXV.

WE ought often to conſider of how little value all is, that we have on Earth, which we muſt for ever depart from when we die; and ſhould therefore ſet our ſelves to ſecure a Bleſſed Eternity where we go; *And which God invites us to, on the eaſie terms of repenting our paſt ſins*; and forſaking thoſe Crimes, which we have been ſo often cloyed with.

CXXVI.

LEt thy Spiritual Reſurrection from ſin, (which is Gods works within thee) aſſure thy reconciliation, and confirm thy Election, ſo as to fill thy heart with bright flames of a ſincere Evangelical Devotion, that thou mayeſt live and ſerve God chearfully, until thy time comes to die; And then with a Holy valour paſs through the Grave with a lively Faith to participate of His Glory, at the Reſurrection; *For by a ready ſubmiſſion, thou wilt Conquer that great Tyrant Death, by a foreſight of thoſe Celeſtial joys, that raiſe thy Soul to know thou ſhalt be with God, the moment that thou dieſt.*

CXXVII.

WE ought to Pray continually for the Holy Ghoſt to dwell in us; to inform and enable us to do our duty in all things, with the Spirit of Faith; which will improve our zeal, and to contemn this Worlds Glories, and will fill our hearts with higher thoughts for a joyful

expectation of a Crown in Heaven, prepared for those who value it.

CXXVIII.

WE *should always have in mind when the Spirit and the Flesh contest within us*; That our Will is the Judge between those two Solicitors, and that God leaves the option of our Eternal Bliss, or Eternal Woe to us; that is, whether we will become Spiritual Disciples, or Carnal Sinners; for no Temptations can make us guilty, unless we consent to sin.

CXXIX.

THe greatest argument against Despair, and for a Pious Life, is very short: *That if we do repent, and forsake our sins with a sincere universal obedience for the future; we shall be as certain to partake of Gods promised Mercies, as if we had never gone on in those former sins*; Though great and frequently repeated, which is great comfort unto all such as Hope to go to Heaven.

CXXX.

CXXX.

THe generality of mankind, do ſpend moſt part of their Lives, on the delightful Acquiſition of Wealth, Honour, Learning, or the like; and are but unskilful Merchants, that purchaſe Rich Jewels, with more hazards, and at higher Rates, then their intrinſick value will afford them to be gainers by, when obtained. And for which, we pay moſt part of our precious time, that is the only Treaſure we have; and of much more worth, then all we can purchaſe in this World, by the profuſe expence of that time, on ſuch gliſtering Trifles as muſt periſh with us, if not before us; *When a tenth part of our miſ-ſpent time, would procure Eternal Wealth, Honour and Joy beyond expreſſion for our Immortal Souls, if we would devoutly Traffick for Heaven.* But we are naturally inclined to ſet our hearts on preſent Fruitions, more then a hundred times their value in reverſion; becauſe Heaven is, or may be far off, and we have time enough to think of that, when we have nothing elſe to do; though this minute we may

be called to our Eternal Doom; and too late find the difference between a Reprobate, and a Regenerate Life.

CXXXI.

A *Man truly Regenerate, will not admit of the leaſt conteſt from Carnal Appetites, his heart being ſo fixed on Heavenly joys, that he deteſts all approaches to divert him, as below the pleaſure he has in his Converſation with God in private*; Who he believes will aſſuredly bring him to Heaven, if he prefer his Service, before the fading Bubbles of this World.

CXXXII.

OF all the Bleſſings that God beſtows on men, *There is none greater then the Peace of Conſcience, which a Pious man finds when he is dying with great comfort*; And which ought to invite all men to live Divine Lives, with aſſurance that God ſees our ſincerity, and gives ſufficient grace accordingly, at the hour of Death.

CXXXIII.

A Great Reprobate, (by the Grace of God) become Regenerate, can experimentally judge how much the felicity of Piety doth exceed his former Epicuriſms: Men in this World, without putting Eternity into the Scales, againſt moments; and obſerves that the continual tranquility of a quiet Conſcience is much more pleaſant, then all his paſt unlawful Fruitions, attended with ſuch Terrors as a guilty Soul is loaded with.

CXXXIV.

EVery Pious man that has forſaken his ſins, for fear to offend God, who he pretends to love alſo; does begin well: *And when God ſees his ſincerity to obey him in all things, He will not let him reſt there, but adds Faith and Grace till his heart longs for a nearer Communion with Chriſt in Heaven; and by a daily cuſtom of ſuch elevated Meditations,* God will bring this Pious man to deſpiſe this World, and to overcome the Terrors of the Grave, by his expectation of Heaven, where his Soul longs to be.

CXXXV.

WE must not desire to die, to be rid of affliction here; *But if we can obtain Grace for so Divine a Love to God, as to be glad to go to Him, when He calls for us*; That will be enough, and such holy courage at the hour of death, will bring great Joy to our expiring Souls.

CXXXVI.

THe Souls of Righteous men, are said to be with God the moment they expire; But to what degree of Bliss they are admitted before the Resurrection, is not revealed unto men; *But it is enough for us to believe that God takes care of those Souls that served, and trusted in Him*, as well as for his departed Saints; We need to desire no more then to be with them.

CXXXVII.

THe Design of Reading the Scriptures, Preaching, Praying, and Fasting, is to bring us to lead such Pious Lives,

Lives, as may ſhew our Faith and Love to God; *And ſo to divert our hearts from Worldly vanities, by conſtant Meditations on the Joys of Heaven, to invite us thither: And alſo encourage our timerous Souls with grace from above, to contemn the Grave,* where they ſhall not reſt one moment. Which if well conſidered, our Holy Reſolutions would ſcorn to fear, and ſhrink back from the laſt ſtep we muſt make, to take poſſeſſion of the Crown we ſeem to labour for, which will ſhew that we have but cold deſires to be with God.

CXXXVIII.

NO Regenerate man can be miſtaken in Gods Service, who ſets his Heart ſincerely to that work; for God who ſees our hearts throughout, will not loſe ſuch a Votary; but will Sanctify his zeal, and make him ſee that an humble contrite heart, is the Sacrifice He likes; *And will ſhew by his returns of Comfort, and Conſolation to ſuch a man, that his Soul will be tranſported with Raptures of joy, in his Divine Contemplations; when he finds ſuch inward aſſurance of Gods favor,*

that

that he cannot doubt of his Reconciliation, when thus enriched with Grace, and thusled by the Holy Ghost, his devout heart will riſe higher, with bright flames of Love, aſpiring to get into Chriſts boſom.

CXXXIX.

WE ſhould in our Meditations, often reflect on the unquiet, and uncertain wealth and Honours of this World, and how unworthy ſuch fleeting fruitions are, to be preferred before Eternal felicities; that ſo we may not ſet our hearts, and ſpend our time on ſuch vain acquiſitions, when immortal happineſs will be had on eaſier, and more certain terms, and we ſurely become the Sons of God.

CXL.

THe greateſt buſineſs of our Lives is to learn to die with holy courage, and not to ſtart from the Grave, nor repine at ſuch means and methods, as our kind God appoints, to make us willing to come to Him, and by ſuch gentle corrections, to withdraw us from the World, *that our hearts may be always working up towards*

towards his Throne of Mercy; where Chriſt has purchaſed places for converted ſinners, amongſt the Angels, *and has appointed his Holy Spirit to invite, and conduct us thither*, by his inward comforts which grow from the Goſpel-promiſes, (and is the Chriſtian Faith) that repented ſins forſaken, ſhall not be charged on us in this World, nor the next; which is the foundation of Divine valour in a dying convert.

CXLI.

THe generality of mankind, are naturally inclined to love thoſe who love them, and to judge of Friendſhip and Hatred, by the aſſiſting or croſſing our deſigns in this World; and the univerſal object herein, is Death: So then we are to conſider the real effects of this great Monarchs power, that controuls the World, and ſee whether he be a more general Friend, or Enemy to mankind: For as he cuts down ſome in their firſt Buds, others in the prime Bloſſoms of their youth, and ſurprizes many of riper years, by hurrying them into unexpected deſtruction, from ſuch Wealth, and Honours, as their carnal

carnal hearts were moſt delighted with; yet the ſame Death, is kind to the moſt of men, who are oppreſſed with various ſorts of Agonies, both of mind and body, beyond the cure of the beſt Remedies, until by Death releaſed from all degrees of maladies, and miſeries. *Now if all this be well conſidered, we may bring our ſelves to ſuch an acquaintance with this mighty Monarch Death, by a daily converſation, and preparation for our ſubmiſſion to his unreſiſtable command, ſo as to rejoyce when we are freed from future evils, and by Death conducted to our Eternal Reſt.* And the ſame moment that our Souls expire, we ſhall conquer Him, who conquers all the World; and for ever Triumph over his Victories over us. So that 'tis our weak Faith, and frail Nature, that makes Death ſeem ſo terrible an Enemy unto unrighteous men only.

CXLII.

THe *true joy of a good Soul in this World, is the very joy in Heaven,* only there 'tis ſuperinveſted with Glory, which a Righteous man enjoys that moment he dies, without any ſtop by the way.

CXLIII.

CXLIII.

THere is nothing more worthy of our continual thoughts, our utmoſt endeavours, and hearty prayers, *then to obtain the Bleſſedneſs to become Regenerate: For when the Holy Ghoſt ſanctifies the heart of ſuch a man, with the comfortable marks of his Reconciliation, and Adoption, that man will ſoon find the continual feaſt of a good conſcience while he lives, to be more pleaſant then all other things which this World affords*; and at his hour of death, the felicity of his Adoption will fill his Soul with holy valour, and accompany him to his Everlaſting Glory. Which joy no mortal fancy can conceive, and is the higheſt works of our ſtrongeſt Faith to think on, and to prepare for.

CXLIV.

HE that can upon examination, find ſuch comfort in his Soul, as to be ever ready and willing to appear at the day of Judgment, *muſt be enlightned and guided by the Holy Ghoſt, and ſanctified by a Spiritual Reſurrection from ſin to grace,*

and from all worldly temptations; ſo as his chief delight, *will be in a Divine converſation with God, by frequent approaches,* for the continuance of ſuch mercies as have ſo raiſed him from the terrors of Hell, unto the joys of Heaven.

CXLV.

THe truly Pious man, is always blowing up his ſmoaking Flax, to flaming Love, for thoſe daily mercies and bleſſings he receives from God; ſo to teach others the felicity he finds therein, to invite them to Heaven.

CXLVI.

TO hear, to read, to wtite and meditate, and to pray often, are the means to underſtand our Duty unto God, as alſo to fix our Faith: But if we do not live and practiſe accordingly, our great knowledge will aggravate our crimes, and provoke God's anger againſt us, *for ſlighting thoſe Divine Inſtructions, which the Holy Ghoſt inſpires us with,* and for which God expects an account from us.

CXLVII.

CXLVII.

HE that can make a total reſignation of himſelf, with all his Intereſts, into God's hands, has made a great advance towards Heaven, and may truſt in God; *ſo the foundation of his Truſt, be laid deep in a fixed heart, on a Spiritual Reſurrection, univerſally cleanſed from all known ſins, and ſo Reconciled, that God will accept of the Truſt:* But we are too apt to miſtake ſuch Reſignations, and to flatter our ſelves with Peace of Conſcience on that account, without a due Examination, whether all our actions and affections, do juſtifie ſuch a Reſignation as we offer up to God; without which, it is a great preſumption to pretend to Truſt in God.

CXLVIII.

TO *be Regenerate*, does include all Bleſſedneſs that we are capable of in this World, with a joyful proſpect into thoſe Eternal felicities we ſhall have in Heaven; and is a ſure Teſtimony of our Reconciliation.

CXLIX.

THere is nothing more clear, then that Holineſs is the foundation of true Happineſs, even in this World, and cannot be doubted in the next; for whoever lives a Divine life, will have his heart full of Divine love to God, and then will ſoon find the felicity of Piety, to be ſo much more pleaſant then all other Diverſions, that he will take all the opportunities he can, *both day and night to approach God in Holy Meditations*, and humble Prayers, as the moſt delightful entertainment his Soul is capable of on this ſide Heaven; and will find God's favour confirmed to him, by Grace ſufficient to ſupport his contented heart through all the Storms this World can raiſe, and fill him with joyful thoughts of his Salvation at the hour of death, which is our higheſt Aim, by the perfection of Piety to obtain.

CL.

[*A Prayer.*]

LOrd give us Grace to diſcern the bottom of our own hearts, that we be not

not deceived by too ſlight a ſearch for Divine Love there; nor flatter our ſelves with hopes of being Favourites in Heaven, while we prefer thy Creatures before Thee, and ſee it not. *Lord guide us by thy Divine Light*, and make us ſee that true Devotion is the moſt ſatisfying diverſion we can have; and will enrich our hearts with deſires to be with Thee in Paradiſe, and will create courage to paſs chearfully through the Grave, ſo to juſtifie our Faith, by our laſt ſtep out of this World, into a glorious Eternity with Thee our God.

CLI.

IF we conſider how many times we have ſtumbled, in our Chriſtian courſe, and how many times fallen, and by what ſmall Rubs been overthrown, we ſhould take more care to ſtumble no more at ſuch Straws; but pray for Grace to enable us to run over all Mountainous temptations, if they croſs our way to Heaven; and when God ſees a vigorous ſincerity to ſerve, love, and truſt in Him, He is then ready to ſupport us through the whole courſe of our lives; which no

man can doubt of, that obſerves how God admits of our many riſings, after ſo many great and wilful falls as moſt men make; and yet He ſtill invites us to repair paſt Evils, by running out our new courſe better, with a due proſpect to our laſt ſtep into the Grave, from whence we muſt ariſe to claim the Crown we run for. And this will raiſe all devout hearts, to the brighteſt flame of Faith, and Love, that men are capable of, when we conſider that every moment of our life, may be that laſt ſtep, by which we muſt gain, or loſe the Crown we run for.

CLII.

BEcauſe Angelical obedience is a perfection of Holineſs above the capacity of Humane Nature, God does make allowance for ſincerity in performance of Duties; but Himſelf holds the Scales, to ſee that our ſincerity be full weight, according to the grains He allows us. *And the Holy Ghoſt within us*, has a continual Treaſury, where thoſe grains are ſo repoſited, as to be ever ready to ſupply our ſincerity, and to turn the Scales for our advantage, according to every

mans

mans utmoſt endeavours, which will never be rejected for want of weight.

CLIII.

LEt no man deſpair of the forgiveneſs of his ſins, if he do confeſs them to God, and do turn from them to Him with ſincere contrition, and repentance, devoutly practiſed for the future, in Obedience, Love, and Faith, truſting in Gods Mercy and Grace, with our reliance on Chriſts Righteouſneſs imparted unto us; on which aſſurance, we may live with comfort, and die with joy. And whoever doth entertain himſelf with ſuch frequent Meditations, will find them to be the moſt delightful diverſions he can have, to conſider that though we may fail in our beſt endeavours, Gods Mercy and Chriſts Righteouſneſs can never fail, can never be exhauſted on our ſins, by ſupporting ſincere Penitents, until brought unto Heaven; ſo that in this high expectation of future Eternal Bliſs, we ought to be contented with our Lots on Earth, whatever they be; truſting in Gods free Mercy, and Chriſts Merits, without deſpairing of our Salvation, if

we

we can repent paſt crimes, and forſake them for the future: *But if we have not a Reſurrection from ſin in this World*, we ſhall have no Reſurrection to Glory in the next World.

CLIV.

Piety and Faith, include all Chriſtianity; but we often miſtake Praying, Preaching, and Godly talk, for Piety, which are but ſteps towards it; for we are obliged to do Righteouſneſs, or elſe we are not of God: and ſo it is with thoſe who think their Faith ſufficient, that can (Parrot-like) repeat their Creed; when 'tis our active Faith that is required, to do what the Goſpel teaches. So that if a due regard to Faith, and Piety be ſettled in our hearts, *we ſhould find more time for Meditations on thoſe great concerns*, whatever our Callings, or Imployments be; for our Bodies cannot be ſo engag'd to labour, or in any Court-crouds ſo imploy'd, but our Souls may be raiſed up to God in fervent Ejaculations, without any Tongue-noiſe, or Face-diſcovery, to inform God, who knows our hearts better then our ſelves do. So

that

that by Faith, and Piety, *we may converſe with God here*, and begin our Eternal happineſs on Earth.

CLV.

IT is a wonder to ſee that all mankind ſhould be loth to leave this World, where ſo few are truly happy, or that think themſelves ſo, (as to be contented:) The weak Old ſick man, would live on in pains; the ſtrong and healthy Youth, the Rich, the Poor, the great in Titles and Commands, the Mighty Princes, and their Slaves, all of all ſorts are ſubject to repine, to Envy, and to Malice, Revenge, and Avarice, to Ambition, or ſome other diſcontent that robs their hearts of peace; and yet all deſire to live on: though our days, if juſtly divided! we ſhould find three parts of four, allotted unto cares, fears, troubles, and ſorrows; and the remaining part, entertained with ſhadows of delight, to mock our ſenſes, rather then ſuch real pleaſures as can affect our Souls; and yet no time, no arguments, no examples, nor our own daily experience, can divert our frail Natures from this infelicity, which

was

was created with us, by a mighty Providence, to ſhew that our time of Sojourning here, muſt not afford any thing of value to divert our hearts from aiming at our Eternal habitation of Reſt; where we are to expect more felicity, then we now know how to wiſh for. *But this the Regenerate man can only underſtand, who knows the felicity of Piety*, and finds there is no ſecurity on Earth, but in loving, fearing, and ſerving God, which aſſures him of a place in Heaven, and gives him a comfortable paſſage thither.

CLVI.

IF men did conſider their Chriſtian calling, and the miraculous Plantation of the Goſpel of Chriſt, by twelve illiterate men, *who were taught by the Spirit of God*, for the converſion of the then Heathen World; we ſhould now have more active Faith, then generally appears by the lives of men; for though we are not called to a ſevere bloudy Martyrdom, as in the Primitive Age, to juſtifie our Faith by Torments unto death: But by the great mercy of God, our required Martyrdom is now ſo gentle, in compariſon

riſon of their ſufferings, that we are only called to Obedience, and Faith; only to own what thoſe Bleſſed Martyrs died for. So that if we prefer Gods Glory and his Service, before our own Carnal Appetites, we ſhall reſiſt all temptations to Luſt, and Vanities, which offend God, and deſtroy our preſent felicity alſo. When this eaſie happy Martyrdom of ſin, is only required of us, to repent paſt crimes, and forbear to repeat them; we ſhall receive in lieu thereof, Gods favour here, and Eternal Joy in Heaven.

CLVII.

A Frequent conſideration of our ſtate towards God, ſhews us the beſt proſpect towards Heaven, and doth teach us the way thither; and begets holy deſires on the expectation of our future joys; and ſuch conſideration alſo, gives us the proſpect of thoſe everlaſting flames that attend us in Hell, if we run on in ſinning; and will terrifie our hearts with the expectation of future Torments, if we neither value Gods promiſes, nor fear his threats: So that nothing can be more concern to mankind, then frequent

and

and ſerious conſideration, of all we ſay, do, and think.

CLVIII.

TO fear to die, is a contradiction to our Faith, and all the zeal we profeſs to God, when we fear to be with Him in Glory; and by which, we undervalue Chriſts purchaſe of a place in Heaven for us, by preferring our abode here, before Eternal happineſs with Him, which we can never obtain but by dying.

CLIX.

NO conſiderate man can pretend to fear God, and do what he is ſure will offend Him; nor can he think that he loves God, when by committing wilful known ſins, he contemns his Laws; nor can he believe that he has any argument to truſt in God, who does neither love, fear, nor ſerve him as he ought; nor can pretend to any parcel of Divine Grace, or comfort in death, if he live and die in his habitual courſe of ſinning.

CLX.

CLX.

WHy do Christians fear to die, but becauſe we do not live after Christian Principles; which neglect, begets infidelity, and makes us doubt to go unto Christ, elſe we could not fear to be with Him, who ſits at Gods right hand in Heaven; and where we may participate of his Eternal Glory, if we live after his Goſpel Rules here; by which we ſhall ſcorn the terrors of Death, and make our days on Earth alſo as happy, as long. But if we go on in Voluptuous Iniquities, pamper'd up for the day of Slaughter, 'twill be no wonder that we tremble at our Diſſolution, and the approach of the terrible day of Judgment. But if we live ready to die, and fit to ſtep into Eternity; the Grave will prove eaſier, then a long life, if compared with the ſhort pleaſures of our beſt Worldly enjoyments, that keep our hearts from Heaven.

CLXI.

FRequent conſideration of our Eternity, does beget a due examination of our

hearts, whether God be there, to direct and ſupport us in our way to Heaven; or if Satan governs, what a diſmal Eternity we are haſting to; *ſo that to have God always in our ſight, by a frequent examination of our hearts*, we may check the firſt appearance of Evil, with the thought of Eternal condemnation; but if Goodneſs inhabit here, then to cheriſh ſuch thoughts, as will blow the holy Fire into flaming Zeal, and declare an Intereſt in Chriſt: *And by a daily cuſtom thus to retire and conſider of our Salvation, will fill our hearts with ſuch a pleaſing habit of Holineſs, as will bring God home to us*, who will not permit a wicked thought where He is pleaſed to dwell.

CLXII.

IF *we did duly conſider that our tranſparent hearts, do ſhew our moſt ſecret thoughts to God*, we ſhould not ſo often provoke him to Anger, by putting our evil thoughts into action; this would be of great uſe, if by practices we can bring our hearts to be as tranſparent to our ſelves, as they are to God; and would in a little time obtain Grace to caſt out wicked

wicked fancies, as fast as Satan can ſuggeſt them, or our own fancies create them; which then would leave no ſtings behind, to poiſon hearts ſo ſtrongly guarded.

CLXIII.

WE ought to be ever mindful that true Religion, is to lead a Divine Life, and will beget Divine Love in our hearts to God, and to endeavour to endear our ſelves ſo, as to become capable of his Love to us, though we can never be worthy of it, we ſhall not fail to have it, if we ſincerely deſire it.

CLXIV.

THe Goſpel ſays, that our Saviour died to ſatisfie God for the ſins of all mankind, that truly repent, and amend, and do ſtedfaſtly believe that if we do ſo, all our ſins, how many and how great ſo ever, ſhall be forgiven us. We muſt then enquire of our own hearts, for the truth of our repentance, whether we ſhall find Arguments to doubt, or to believe our ſelves, to be in the number of them that

Christ came to bless, by turning us from our Iniquities; and then it will be our Duties, as an effect of our Faith, to believe we are amongst such penitent sinners as Christ has Redeemed with his Bloud, and will be no presumption to think we shall have places in Heaven on His account, if we come to God by Him; and may also have an humble assurance in our own hearts, of such a joyful Resurrection, as will allay the terrors of Death, and give us a chearful passage to his Eternal Bliss; and thus Pious Penitents may die chearfully, without presuming on their own Justification, and less assurance then this, may prove a groundless despair, on our diffidence in Gods promises, or an undervaluing of Christs Merits, and Intercession for us; on which our Repentance, and Conversion is grounded, and our Salvation depends.

CLXV.

COnsideration has a vast extent, it reaches all past time, and looks on towards Eternity to come; it searches into Hell, and up to Heaven, and humbly con-

conſults the glorious Attributes of God, and teaches us how to know, and obey his Will; it enquires into the bottom of our own hearts, and the fathomleſs thoughts of our unbounded fancies, how they ſtand towards the Obedience we profeſs to God; And if on a full conſideration of all our ways, we find our hearts fixed on God, it does produce Divine conſolations, it entertains and ſatisfies us with a continual variety of joyful objects to enlarge our Souls on, ſuitable to the great end we aim at. So that conſideration is the greateſt and moſt uſeful Leſſon, that was ever taught to man; and the moſt delightful ſtudy we can practice, to make our troubleſom travels in this World eaſie to us, by our conſtant expectation of Eternal Joy, and Glory at our Journeys end; which requires much conſideration how to reach, leſt we miſs our way thither. *He that retires to conſider what he muſt do to be ſaved, makes his Religion his buſineſs, for without retirement, our thoughts flow at large; but in retired Holy Meditations, ſome awe and reverence does ſeize on the Soul*, which while that Pulſe beats, declares it to be alive, and active, in ſearching for its Sal-

vation, and never fails of finding thoſe comforts it ſeeks in this World, by the aſſurance of Glory in the next.

CLXVI.

IF the felicity of Piety were generally underſtood, men would make more haſt to become Regenerate; that in our aſſaults from Satan, and injuries from men, we might Triumph in ſuch Storms, as terrifie the hearts of impious Livers: But above all, if we conſider an impenitent habitual ſinner, on his Death-bed, full of deſpair through the horror of his Crimes, and apprehenſion of the Hell he is falling into; and at the ſame time obſerve a converted ſinner, reconciled to God long before, now delivering up his Soul unto his Saviour, with a fixed Faith, and a chearful heart, haſting to take poſſeſſion of a bleſſed Seat in Heaven, prepared for him; it muſt needs invite the lookers on to cleanſing, and reconciling to God before Death ſurprize us. This great concern for our Eternity, is in few words thus: God has pronounced, that impenitent ſinners ſhall not enter into Heaven, nor ſhall true peni-

penitents be ſhut out; which confirms the felicity of Piety, unto a Regenerate man.

CLXVII.

FAith ever was, and ever will be the foundation of Religion; for no man can worſhip what he believes is not, nor can endeavour to pleaſe, or fear to offend he knows not who, nor what, nor why; ſo that we muſt believe there is ſome Divine Exiſtence from whence all things are, and by which all things ſubſiſt, and we among the reſt are what we are: From theſe natural reaſonings, and notions, we enquire into Traditions, and by ſearching the Holy Scriptures, we are powerfully taught concerning God, Chriſt, and Holy Ghoſt, and there alſo learn to improve our Faith; to believe the Reſurrection after death, and that if we do live Righteouſly, we ſhall when we die, participate of that glorious Being, in the Eternal preſence of our incomprehenſible Creator. The next ſtep our Faith leads us towards Heaven is, from the conſideration that our Duſt and Aſhes is entertain'd on Earth with ſo great pomp,

pomp, and ſuch high delights, that we muſt believe, and expect that our Immortal Souls will have much greater tranſporting Joys in Heaven, then our fleſh is capable of, until refined for the Day of Judgment: And if thus by pious living, we can raiſe our Faith to truſt in Chriſts merits, and interceſſion, 'twill bring us unto an humble confidence of our Salvation when we die; which cannot be had but from above, and ſuch Grace from God, will encourage us to look more kindly on Death, who only can conduct us to this everlaſting Joy we believe in, and hope for. *So that by ſuch Meditations of Heaven*, Death will become ſo familiar an acquaintance, as not to fright us from going to God in His company, and will in our laſt hour, ſupport thoſe Souls with comfort, whoſe ſincerity God ſees, through all our failings, and accepts of.

CLXVIII.

'Tis a wonder to ſee what pains men take, and what hazards run, to gain periſhing wealth, to entertain our Bodies with, which are more periſhing then

then the wealth we ſeek, and all that time, neglect our Immortal Souls for their Eternity. And though Time be our great concern, we value nothing leſs, but vex our Brains, and ſtudy ſtill how to be rid of what we cannot keep, nor ever can recall: And though from day to day we are cloy'd with our fruitions, and tired with new delights, even worn out with various diverſions, yet in our whole lives never can afford a few minutes time to gain true Reſt; but ſtill from Age to Age intice, and betray our Souls unto new vanities, till youth and vigour is decayed; and then too, revive our dead appetites with freſh budding idle fancies, (often worſe then all that went before) until we are ſurpriz'd by Death, and hurried into Eternity, before we do ſee our ſelves old enough to be at leaſure to think of that Grave, which is every moment ready to ſwallow us: whereas, if we did ſet our ſelves at firſt to reſiſt all Aſſaults from Satan, with a pious vigour, and obſerve it, we ſhall find and feel great pleaſure in every Victory over every Temptation, which formerly did enſlave and triumph over us. And then, what honour, what ambition can be greater,

greater, then to conquer ſo great a Conqueror? and by practice, thus improving our Divine Military skill this way, we ſhall raiſe daily Trophies ſo acceptable to God, that we ſhall diſcern our Souls climbing up to Heaven thereon.

CLXIX.

IT is worthy conſideration, how many men do ſpend their whole lives in reading Books, to learn what has been done of old, thereby to inſtruct the preſent Age, and to inform the future; and when by much ſtudy, and by time grown decrepit, they ſlip into their Graves with the moſt ignorant, and do there create, and feed their own Worms, who underſtand not that great wiſdom, ſo much labour'd for; and then too late ſuch Learned men will find, that more advantage might have been made, *by ſtudying themſelves*, (ne're thought on) ſtill labouring for a few bubbles of momentary praiſe, as of more uſe, then to ſecure Eternal Bliſs for their immortal Souls. *Self-ſtudy is a continual Inquiſition on our own hearts, to conſider all our thoughts*, how they work towards a good, or a bad end,

end, and then to cheriſh or ſuppreſs them as they ariſe; for ſome appear in forms at firſt ſight ſo ugly, they cannot be too ſoon ſmothered, and ſome ſo diſguiſed in pleaſing ſhapes, as may deceive a careleſs heart, if not acquainted with the marks they wear; and that way Armed, and well warned by former harms, ſo as to avoid new wounds from Enemies ſo dangerous, that we muſt not Treat, nor dally with, but make them Retreat by a brisk Charge, and bold Defie. We are alſo to ſtudy to diſcover another ſort of Foes, more dangerous then all the reſt, who lye in cloſe Ambuſh, until ſome opportunity do call them forth for an Aſſault; and are of form ſo lovely, and ſo innocent in ſhew, that Charity her ſelf would warm their cold Limbs in her own Boſom, and not diſcern the danger, until theſe cunning Serpents bite beyond reſiſtance, and then declare for the Supremacy over the whole man; and then muſter up all his ſenſes, and all his faculties againſt himſelf, and thus ſteal a Victory, by corrupting thoſe Guards that were given for his defence. So that by a long negligence, we grow ſo ignorant of our ſelves, that every aſſault from Satan,

ſhakes

ſhakes the whole man, until at laſt he Roots him up for ever: But if our Eternal Being is conſiderable, we ſhould allow ſome time to ſtudy our own natural inclinations, and affections to good or evil; and to learn ſuch Rules as may rectifie our ſenſes, to ſubmit unto our more rational Souls, *when led by Grace to work upward towards God*, which will teach us the wiſdom of Salvation, and raiſe our Faith to ſuch dependance on Chriſt, as no worldly Learning can conteſt for the priority. Let us then imploy our time ſo, as to learn to know our ſelves, and our duty unto God, in which our everlaſting happineſs is moſt concerned.

CLXX.

THere can be no better Arguments for frequent Meditations, then to think ſeriouſly of our ſins, of Death, and our Reſurrection to Judgment, as we ought; and to prepare for ſo great a concern, at a minutes call to ſtep into Eternity; ſo ready, that we may ſo love God, and fear Him, as to ſerve him with delight here, and to have Celeſtial joy when we expire.

CLXXI.

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NO man ought to think himſelf above the reach of temptation; for when Satan finds us but a little relaxed in our Devotion, or any thing cold in our affection to God, he can dreſs an old forſaken ſin, ſo like to an Angel of Light, as to ſurprize a young Divine Lover at firſt ſight, (when his Guards are withdrawn) but when his Beloved ſees him in ſuch danger, *He will by His Divine guiding Light, unmask the diſguiſed Fiend*, and ſo reclaim his near lapſed Lover, unto his devout Addreſſes as before, and make him ſee by ſuch Aſſaults, that he can ſtand no longer in favour, then by his Grace ſupported: But he that is become a well-ſettled Regenerate man, ſo as to ſtand ever on his Guard, with holy courage to repell all approaches from Satan, as faſt as they appear, will make ſuch frequent Victories his chief delight; and when our common Enemy ſees that all his attempts on ſuch a man, are in vain, he will deſiſt, who only watches opportunities for his attempts, on thoſe he finds remiſs; and who is often belyed

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by ſome men who do invite him to ſuch eaſie Victories, on thoſe of his own complexion, as black within, and as great Devils as himſelf.

CLXXII.

ALas poor man! doſt thou complain becauſe thou canſt not ſleep ten hours every night, when Nature doth require but five? Thou feareſt to die! yet wouldſt be dead near half the time thou haſt to live; for ſleep is ſo like death, that we cannot diſtinguiſh wherein they differ, until we awake. But thou art tired for want of entertainment in long Nights! Alas poor man, that is a ſad grievance indeed, and worthy of pity; for thy Saintſhip has no ſins to confeſs, nor pardon to ask of God, no cauſe to waſh thy Bed with tears; Heaven, and Hell, with Eternity to come, are not worth thy thinking on, until the Bell toll thee to thy Grave; and then too late thou wilt wiſh for ſome of thy time loſt in ſleep, then to watch, and pray, and to lament in Sackcloth and Aſhes. While the Regenerate man finds no time ſo fit to raiſe his Soul to Heaven,

as when he awakes at Mid-night; nor any conſolation ſo great, as in thoſe hours borrowed from ſleep, *to converſe with God in holy Meditations; which fills his heart with preſent joy, and peace of conſcience, that laſts the whole day after*; and is a good remedy to prevent ſuch fancies as do invade the drowſie Souls of lazie men, when they cannot ſleep.

CLXXIII.

ART thou fallen by a ſurprize! who has not, or may not fall ſo? But if theſe falls be frequent, there is much danger in ſuch Relapſes, and though not fit to cauſe deſpair, yet worthy of great care for the future; leſt thy ſurprizes grow into a habit, and prove but an excuſe, when thy ſelf betrays thy ſelf ſo often, which will find no credit at the day of Judgment, to procure a pardon from the Almighty ſearcher of our hearts; whoſe Omnipotence is affronted if we think by a trick to hide from Him' thoſe crimes we are commanded to con-' feſs, bewail, and forſake.

CLXXIV.

WHen God gives us grace to make holy Vows for ſelf-denials, with power to perform them, *He fails not (by his Holy Spirit) to aſſure us of his acceptance thereof*, by the joy our hearts will feel after every reſiſtance of Satanical aſſaults, which will in little time encourage us to take more and more delight in thoſe Victories over our ſelves, who are the greateſt Enemies we have.

CLXXV.

IT is no eaſie work for men in health and proſperity, to think ſo often and ſeriouſly of Death, as is requiſite for our preparation to the Grave, though no other time is ſo proper for it: For when pains and ſickneſs do diſtract our minds, we are only diligent to ſeek remedies for cure, and often find none, but do die with a ſhort prayer ſighed out; as if [*Lord have mercy on us*] were a charm to redeem threeſcore years miſ-ſpent in ſins and vanities, without any thought of our Salvation all that time; as if Heaven

Heaven were too melancholly a buſineſs to trouble our idle heads with, while Youth in vigour reigns, which ſeldom affords any credit for the felicity of Piety, and ſuch Romance diſcourſes as they underſtand not; while a Righteous man knows no joy on Earth, like his expectation of Heaven, and living ever ready to die, in hope to be with God there.

CLXXVI.

WHen God endows the hearts of men with Holineſs, *it is a ſure mark of his eſpecial favour, to give us a free admiſſion into the Court of Heaven, to be with Him there, as often as we pleaſe, in our Meditations*; and if we can improve this Holineſs, ſo as to become Divine Lovers of Him, *we ſhall be admitted (as it were) into the Bed-chamber of the King of Kings*, to enjoy all the Priviledges and Immunities that His departed Saints have there. To know this, and to do thus, is to enjoy Heaven on Earth; in which felicity, the Atheiſt and the Hypocrite can have no ſhare with a Divine Lover, *who is ever ready to be ſnatch'd*

up into Heaven, while he is meditating of his going thither.

CLXXVII.

IF we have joy in Earthly fruitions, what will our happineſs in Heaven be! and if the hope only, and expectation of Heaven in pious hearts, be pleaſure above all our enjoyments here, what tranſporting joy will the poſſeſſion of Eternal Bliſs be! when we ſhall ſee God, and participate of his glory as the Angels do; *and if we be ſo Regenerate as to believe this, and do take delight in ſuch contemplations, it is a ſure ſign that the Holy Ghoſt is at work within us*, and will beget ſuch holy courage in our hearts, as to paſs us through the Grave with chearful Souls to be with God. And if we love, and truſt in Him as we ought, there can be no Diverſions ſo delightful, as ſuch Devotion is to a Divine Lover, *who converſes day and night with God, that is never abſent from them who do ſincerely delight in Him.*

CLXXVIII.

CLXXVIII.

WE are taught to pray againſt ſudden death, that is, to perſwade and lead us on to be always ſo prepared, that no kind of death may be too ſudden, but that we (like *Eliah*) may every moment expect to be ſnatch'd up into Heaven by a fiery Chariot, or taken up in a flaming zeal of Divine Love, by an Apoplexy, or ſome other accident, of as quick an aſcent as his Chariot was. But generally our miſtake is, to pray for lingering long ſickneſs, only to gain time for terrors to awake our ſleepy Souls with ſighs and tears, to move God to mercy then, which we valued not before: But the Regenerate man who has ſo cleared his accounts with God, at the Holy Sacrament, *as to have Chriſt new born within him, and is ſo led by the Holy Ghoſt as to ſanctifie his future life*, that he lives ever ready, and willing to die: That man will find the moſt ſudden death to be God's mercy, and a favour to free him from the Agonies of a tedious ſickneſs; for we too often do miſtake ſuch ſudden diſſolutions, for God's Judgments,

to

to ſee men fall ſo; when themſelves feel a joy to be caught up into Heaven, without pain, to take poſſeſſion of their Eternal Bliſs. Now God grant that all men may be ſo well prepared for all kind of deaths, as none may be too ſudden, for any who call on his Holy Name.

CLXXIX.

[*A Prayer.*]

O *Holy Ghoſt, Lord God the Comforter, who art never abſent from thoſe that deſire thee with ſincerity; vouchſafe, I beſeech thee, ſo to enter my heart that I may find thee there, conſecrating of it for thy Temple, by thy abode therein*; and now direct me how to welcom ſo great a Gueſt, with gratitude and joy, for ſuch Divine comforts, *as flow in hearts where thou inhabiteſt*, (and where Satan dwelt before.) Lord keep poſſeſſion againſt Him, and all invading Enemies; for I cannot defend my ſelf without Thy aid; nor of my ſelf know when, or how to approach the Throne of Mercy, unleſs my Addreſſes be ſo guided, and ſo ſanctified by Thee, as God will not reject them.

CLXXX.

CLXXX.

[*A Prayer.*]

O Lord God, I beſeech thee give me Grace to imploy the great fancy thou haſt given me, on my greateſt concern, to obtain thy Mercy and Grace, with Chriſts Righteouſneſs, to work out my Salvation; that I may no longer miſſpend the time, which every moment haſts on to my Eternity; but with diligent zeal, to pray for Faith in Chriſt, ſuch as will be the foundation for a Divine Life, to ſhew my love to Thee, my God, by an univerſal obedience, with purity, charity, and ſuch humility, as will raiſe my heart unto the higheſt pitch of Divine Love; that my converſion may be now more eminent, then my crimes have been. And now, O God! I beg thy Grace to confirm, and fix my Soul in the aſſurance of my Reconciliation, and Adoption, by receiving the Holy Sacrament this day with ſuch Faith, and due preparation, as to put off the Old man for ever. And ſo to eat, and drink the conſecrated Bread and Wine, as the Body and Bloud of my Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt,

Chriſt, with all his benefits; as He himſelf gave himſelf to his Diſciples here on Earth; *that I, now by thy Holy Spirit led, may like them, walk after Him.* And let thy mercy, O Lord! ſupply my defects, in the performance of this great Duty, according to the ſincerity of my heart, entirely offer'd up to Thee, my God, in this days Sacrifice; ſo as the Records of my ſins may be cancell'd in Heaven, and my Name be now writ in thy Book of Life, amongſt thy reconciled Sons, on my Saviour Jeſus Chriſt's account.

CLXXXI.

TO ſpend our time on idle thoughts, is like purſuing of vain waking Dreams; a folly ſo much leſs then nothing, that only Mad-mens fancies can delight in, and is a ſhame for ſober men to imitate, whoſe Souls refin'd by Piety, may be ever on the wing towards Heaven, *filled with felicities above the reach of any worldly hearts to gueſs at*, which is the Pious man's continual entertainment, and delight; *ſo to paſs his time with his Creator here on Earth, as to find his heart full of ſomething ſo Divine, that he*

he does think himſelf in Heaven, while that Celeſtial flame enlightens him.

CLXXXII.

IDleneſs is the fountain of all evil; the Devil directs his chief Emiſſaries on Earth, with Addreſſes to an idle perſon, who is then fit to take impreſſions from all ſorts of temptations, when God is abſent; 'tis ſuch men that invite Satan to ſteal by degrees into their empty hearts in ſuch diſguiſes, as He well knows ſuits beſt with their idle fancies, ſo to divert them from all Holy purpoſes, with ſome Idea's of paſt delightful objects; *until they quite forget their ſacred Vows to have God ever in their ſight, which ſecure them from all ſuch aſſaults.* And it is but a ſlight Argument, which many men uſe to excuſe their time ſpent in idleneſs, becauſe they want Learning, and the uſe of Books for their diverſion; when all Ages ſhew, that Piety is not, nor ever was confined to Learning: 'Tis not our Wiſdom, nor our Eloquence, *but our Faith and our ſanctified affections, that is moſt acceptable to God*; and ſuch ſincere affections, will never want devout enter-

entertainment to keep our hearts ſo fixed on Heaven, and our concern there, as will baffle Satan with all his Arts, as often as He attaques us.

CLXXXIII.

TO be really contented, is an Epicuriſm, ſeldom thought on, and ſo far from being underſtood, as but little valued by the moſt of men, who are overbuſie in labouring to change our conditions; ſtill aiming to get what we have not, though the laſt acquiſition rarely brings more ſatisfaction, then what we had before. Whereas a contented man, has all that he deſires, and enjoys what he has, becauſe allotted to him by the Divine Providence, who doth chuſe better for thoſe that do relie on Him, then we can for our ſelves.

CLXXXIV.

WE ought not to repine at croſſes, nor to murmur at ſickneſs, or any other affliction whatever, becauſe they are God's Cordial Antidotes, to repell the poiſon of ſuch ſins, as He ſees do uſe

uſe to infect our Souls with malignant diſeaſes, ſuch as create a deſpairing conſcience when we die, and hazard Eternal Torments in the next World; we are therefore to kiſs the Rod that works ſo great a cure, and that Hand that ſmites us in Love, to make us fit for his Mercy, by repentance, and converſion from being great ſinners, to become his Adopted Sons, and ſo above the venom of future biting afflictions; *for He only hath perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on God, the Rock of our Salvation.*

CLXXXV.

NO man can do all that he ſhould do, but all men may do as much as they can do; and God requires no more, to obtain his Love here, and Salvation hereafter: But we are naturally ſo prone to flatter our ſelves in this point, that when we think our hearts moſt ſafe, we are often ſurprized by a forſaken ſin, and ſhamefully ſubdued by it: For when we make a Covenant with our Eyes, and Hearts, not to go aſtray; though we cannot hinder the firſt look, or thought that is amiſs, we may ſo check them at

firſt appearance, as they ſhall not invade us a ſecond time, nor bite on, to harm us; ſo that, if we do ſtumble heedleſly, we may prevent wilful tumbling into Relapſes, and wallowing in them, for which there is no excuſe.

CLXXXVI.

IT is worthy of obſerving, how ſome men by a long cuſtomed and ſettled habit of living ill, have ſo Naturalized their ſins to themſelves, and themſelves to the Devil, as in time they grow to think it a point of honour and conſcience, to be conſtant to that profeſſion, and are aſham'd to quit Satans black Livery, which they prefer before their firſt engagement to God in Baptiſm. I have heard a Gentleman ſay, that when he had lived many years in great Iniquities, it pleaſed God by a long ſickneſs, to beget ſuch remorſe in his heart, as upon his recovery to become a Convert: But for a long time after, he did conceal this change, as aſham'd to practiſe his converſion by a publick new courſe of life, (ſo much out of faſhion) and did many times in converſatiou ſeem to like, what he

he liked not, to avoid being thought an Hypocrite; until he conſider'd how much greater a ſhame it was, to ſerve God in a corner, ſo to ſmother his higheſt Act of Mercy towards him, in not daring to own the thoughts of his Salvation; and how unworthy he was to become an Adopted Son of God, while he feared to declare his Hope of ſo high an Advancement: On which account, he did take courage to profeſs his Converſion, which he thought not fully to manifeſt until the hour of his death. By which we may ſee, how dangerous it is to run on in habitual ſins, until we grow aſhamed to forſake them.

CLXXXVII.

IT is a wonder to conſider, that mankind ſhould be ſo univerſally bred up from our Infancy to ſtudy, and by laborious callings to imploy our Talents of Senſe and Reaſon, in the acquiſition of ſuch periſhing goods, as the World affords; and generally ſo late begin to inform our ſelves of our Souls intrinſick value, being created for a participation of God's Glory, when aſcended into

Heaven; how unworthy an exchange then do we make, who believe this, and yet do violently labour for the ſhort-liv'd vanities, (and indeed) the nothingneſs of this World, in compariſon with Eternity, at the immenſe price of our Immortal Souls loſs, and our Eternal joys in Heaven, for everlaſting flames in Hell. And this, becauſe we do not conſider, that God did not make the World, to mock man with fallacious delights in the enjoyment of his Creatures, but intended it for our entertainment, and diverſions in our Journey to Heaven; and therefore has given us rational Souls, ſuch as by living virtuouſly, we may enjoy the World and Him together; and ſo advance our ſelves by gratitude, and love here, to a confirmation of a full fruition of Him at the Reſurrection: Thus if we would ſincerely ſtudy virtue, and ſet a true value on the perfection of Righteouſneſs, we might enjoy this World with double pleaſure, and have Heaven hereafter, with all its Glory alſo.

CLXXXVIII.

CLXXXVIII.

WE do miſtake nothing in this World, more then our pleaſures, which we do compell our fancies to comply in, and do often take more pains to juſtifie thoſe vanities, then any delight we find in ſuch ſhort-liv'd fruitions: *Whereas if our hearts were ſet on God, and our Souls raiſed to ſerious thoughts of our Eternal Bliſs*; ſuch Divine entertainments, would grow to a continual feaſt, full of ſurprizing joys, and ſuch Heavenly delights, that we ſhould with pain ſuffer, and with remorſe endure our vain diverſions, and lament to ſee that our Nature does require ſuch frequent relaxes from our moſt rarified, and ratified Devotions.

CLXXXIX.

WE cannot want Arguments for Meditation, if we call to mind our Chriſtianity, that is, diligently examine if we do participate of Chriſts Righteouſueſs, to ſuch a degree, that our converſion from ſin, and our natural cor-

ruptions, be changed into such an Evangelical habit of Holiness, *as to manifest our Spiritual Resurrection*, and Election to our own hearts; for then, nothing can engage us unto higher gratitude, and love, then a true sense of so great a benefit received, which when seriously considered, will mount up our Souls to frequent extasies of blessed Joy, by our devout approaches in Adoration of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, *who are all three always working us up to our Salvation.* Then which, nothing can be more worthy of our Meditation, and sincere examination, that we may be ready for the day of Judgment; which no man can be, that does not live so, as to be chearfully ready to die; for it is a much greater business to go out of the World, then to live in it.

CXC.

NO other man can cozen us so much, as we cozen our selves, in what we like; because we naturally raise fallacious reasonings, against true reason, to justifie our unlawful desires; and do very easily perswade our selves to comply with our most idle fancies, and eagerest appetites,

tites, to what we know is againſt all Reaſon, and Religion too; thinking that our frailty is excuſe enough, to follow our blind inclinations to evil; and do alſo indulge our averſion to goodneſs, on the ſame account, ſo long as our endeavours do proſper in wickedneſs. But when we are Thunder-ſtruck by ſome ſurprizing affliction, then we can begin to think, and to find how much better, *and pleaſanter it is to delight in God*, and by our utmoſt endeavours to improve that delight, by frequent and fervent Addreſſes, until we obtain new Celeſtial joys, which ſoon diſcard all our old Carnal fruitions, *by a conſtant fixing of our whole hearts on Heaven*; ſo as to be really offended at the moſt neceſſary diverſions, *when they interrupt our Divine communication with Chriſt*, for the haſtning on of our preparation towards that Eternal Glory he has purchaſed for us. Which is the moſt joyful expectation of a Regenerate man, who ſees the difference between momentary Vanities, and everlaſting Bliſs, and ſets him on fire to deſire above all things, *to fix his heart on God*, and to delight in Holineſs, as his ſupreme felicity on this ſide Heaven.

CXCI.

CXCI.

WHoever has the patience to read, and the Piety to practice these plain Lessons, (if he observe it) will find that his felicity does increase with his Devotion, and that his days will grow fuller and fuller of tranquility, in the midst of Worldly Storms, and feel them not. Let him also observe with what security he sleeps, with what joy he awakes at all hours to find his heart at work with God, before his Eyes are quite open, giving God thanks for all his Mercies, and above all the rest, for thus turning him from all his Iniquities before it be too late, that he might not trust unto the uncertain security of the best Death-bed Repentance; but to live and die so reconciled to God, as to manifest his pre-conversion, by a chearful Righteous life, and a joyful Resignation of his Soul unto Christ when he expires, will be joy indeed.

CXCII.

JUdge not the serious looks of every pensive man, as if his heart were oppressed

preſſed with diſcontents; *who may that minute be converſing with God in Meditation*, and triumphing over the Glories of this World, which thou enjoyeſt with all its delights, and which he may have had as high as mortal man can fancy fading happineſs; But now, as tired with buſie Crouds, and cloyed with gliſtering Vanities, *He entertains his Soul with inward elevated joys*, for ſo great a Victory over himſelf, which thou ſeeſt not; and doſt therefore pity, or condemn, what thou wouldſt admire, if clearly underſtood.

CXCIII.

IF *the Spirit of Divine Meditation, were with ſincere affection fully improved*, by the diligent practice of raiſing our Souls as near to God, as our mortal fancies can reach; *the Holy Ghoſt would at ſuch times aſſiſt us with ſuch increaſe of Piety*, and ſuch growing joys in our near approaches to the Throne of Mercy, *as would ſhew us ſome bright Rays of that glorious Majeſty we adore*, to affect our Souls with ſuch tranſporting thoughts, as would ſet our hearts on fire, with eager deſires to be amongſt thoſe Angels that

that do attend on the Majeſty of Heaven; *whoſe love and goodneſs, in mercy admits us Duſt and Aſhes, ſo to converſe with Him*, as a clear Teſtimony to our own hearts of our Adoption; *by which pious practiſing to fix our affections on God, we ſhall ſo delight in Him, as now to conquer all thoſe Imperious Appetites, that have ſo often conquer'd us*; and may ſoon learn the Celeſtial Military Art, to ſubdue all temptations that aſſault us; and from their Ruines, raiſe freſh Trophies every day, moſt acceptable to God, and ſo beneficial to our ſelves, that we may diſcern our Souls mounting up to Heaven thereon.

CXCIV.

WE ought to look on Death, as chief Goaler on Earth, God's prime Officer, by Him intruſted only with the cuſtody of our impriſon'd Bodies in the Grave, until the great Goal-delivery at the day of Judgment; when Death muſt deliver up our impriſon'd Duſt, at a moments warning, to meet our Souls at God's Tribunal; where his Office ends with Himſelf, who is then no more. So that

that instead of quarrelling with Death, for doing of his duty, let us make peace, and get a Reconciliation with his great Master, that we be not lodged in Deaths Dungeon, amongst the impenitent Malefactors, but may be placed in his best Apartment, with the Reconciled sinners, *by God's Grace become Saints*, and pray that we may with them appear in their glorious Resurrection, with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CXCV.

I That write my own thoughts only to review them, for my own satisfaction, must say again and again, that whoever seeks God with sincerity, will certainly find him, and shall find that he has found him: And though early seeking, and early finding be best, as most safe, because no man can promise himself one minute longer to seek God, then his first call to it; yet if he find favour to be called again, and be sent to work in God's Vineyard at the last hour of his day, and God see that he works then, with such vigour in that last hour, as if he would equal, or out-do, any that came in

in to work before him; the Lord of the Vineyard obſerves his endeavours, and rewards him equal with the firſt comers. (Though no man ought to truſt unto a Death-bed Repentance on this Argument.)

Becauſe the beſt Rule is, to remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth; the next beſt is, to remember Him in the time of full Manhood, in the ſtrength and vigour of thy Age; but if not then, the next beſt is to remember him in thy Old Age, before thou haſt quite forgot him, leſt it be too late; for though it be laſt, and worſt, yet then is not too late with God, if we anſwer whenever He calls, *He will give us Grace to do whatever he calls for.* And to give him then our whole hearts bathed in penitential tears, full of contrition for all paſt offences, he will accept them, and make us ſee that his Mercy has followed us, through all our wild inſolent contempts of the higheſt nature, which aggravates repeated ſins, after pardons upon pardons begged: So that when God doth not forſake, but follow and watch over ſuch Reprobates, and does ſnatch them from the brink of deſtruction, it is to bring them to a Reconciliation,

conciliation, *and ſuch a Reſurrection from ſin, as will ſupport them for ever after by his Holy Spirit*; which ſhews that his Mercy, and his Grace, are beyond the power of our ſins to deface; *for if our Repentance, and Contrition, be His own work within us, the operation of that Grace will teſtifie, that his Mercy endureth for ever.*

Let no man then deſpair of Gods Mercy, or think it too late to repent, if he can forſake his Iniquities, ſo as for the future to love and ſerve God as he ought; for above all things, we muſt believe that God does abound in Mercy and Grace, more then we can do in ſins; and that Jeſus Chriſt is the Lord our Righteouſneſs, *and when we find that the Holy Ghoſt dwells ſo in our hearts, as to create an effectual application of God the Father, and the Sons work within us*; we may comfort our ſelves with an humble aſſurance that all three, the whole Trinity together, have wrought this Salvation for our ſick Souls; when reſtored to ſuch health, and favour as to fall into no more deſperate Relapſes, after we come to a true ſenſe, and ſhame for our dangers paſt, and ſuch a joy for our eſcape, as becomes Rege-

nerate men: And then, we ſhall know no felicity on Earth, that exceeds ſuch an expectation of Heaven, as will fill the hearts of men endued with ſuch tranſports from above. And this great Bleſſedneſs, the moſt illiterate man is as capable of, as the moſt Learned; for God will be found, according to the ſincerity of thoſe that ſeek Him, not for their Abilities, or Qualities; and Jeſus Chriſt is ever as willing to be the Rock of our Salvation, as we can be deſirous to build on Him, for our Foundation.

CXCVI.

WE do too often miſtake Repentance, and abuſe our ſelves with a belief that a few cuſtomary ſighs, will blow our ſins out of Gods remembrance, and his Judgments alſo from lighting on us; but we ſhall find it far otherwiſe in the end: For if by the recollecting, and renouncing of our ſins, with zealous confeſſing them to God, will not draw tears from our Eyes, we are to heighten our contrition, by a foreſight and aggravation of ſuch Eternal torments, as are due unto us from our incenſed God, and to pray

pray with vigorous ſighs, and ardent groans inſtead of tears, until our hearts do melt within us, to expreſs the ſenſe we have of our offences, and by frequent repeating our indignation againſt our ſelves, with the greateſt remorſe we can raiſe our hearts to; that ſo we may divert Gods Judgments, and convert them into Mercy and Grace, through our Faith in the Bloud of Chriſt, which only can waſh all ſins, and all ſorrows for ſin, from our hearts, and then fill our Souls with a joyful feeling of our Reconciliation: Thus by ſincerity ſtriving with our utmoſt endeavours to imitate, and to out-do the returning Prodigal, in our Repentance, we may be reſtored and welcomed into our Fathers houſe, and in his Arms find our Eternal Reſt.

CXCVII.

When long habitual ſinners are call'd to repentance by Grace from above, ſo as to become fully reconciled to God, ſuch men ought to give Glory unto his Holy Name, by ſome eminent way of expreſſing their gratitude for ſo great a bleſſing, and for ever after to live cloſe

up to Heaven, on the ſtrength of their new Reconciliation, and in expectation that every moment they breath, may be their laſt puff of breath, which is Death; in which puff their Souls expire into everlaſting Bliſs: So that as often as they lye down to ſleep, and when they awake to work, until they ſleep again, they ſhould (with all their worldly affairs) mingle devout reflections on the Mercies they have received; and feed on thoſe Celeſtial Fruits which grow from their Divine Reconciliation, ſuch as will keep them ever watchful, and ever ready for Gods call to their Eternal Reſt, and make them joyful at their quickeſt paſſage thither. For ſudden death, ſeems only uneaſie and unſafe to lookers on, unto whom ſurprizes are moſt terrible, but can be none unto them who every minute do expect, what they know is every minute coming on, *and is moſt welcom to ſuch Souls as the Holy Spirit dwells with*; by which ſure marks of their Election, they are ever ready and deſirous to be with God, which expectation is the higheſt felicity that man can have on Earth.

CXCVIII.

CXCVIII.

WE do generally flatter our ſelves with a belief that our chief aim is to be in Heaven, and to enjoy God there, while we fear nothing more then going thither; and it is becauſe we do not ſeriouſly enough conſider what it is to die, until the moment we are dying. And yet our tongues do talk ſo frequently of Death, as if we thought of nothing elſe; but ſuch ſlight thoughts do vaniſh with thoſe Airy diſcourſes, and we as ſoon forget to prepare for what we were talking of; which makes ſo many men ſtart back from the fruition of their higheſt wiſhes, and are frighted from taking poſſeſſion of their Eternal happineſs. And though dying chearfully be a Divine valour, above the reach of Duſt and Aſhes, *God doth ever ſupport thoſe that are his, with ſuch a proportion of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, for their Souls ſpiritual food and nouriſhment, as ſhall add courage unto all that deſire to be with Him*; and they ſhall be ſo, the moment that they die; which is ſufficient conſolation, to invite men to live ſo piouſly, as to die chearfully.

CXCIX.

THough no mans Piety can attain to the purity of Angels, until they become Angels; yet pious mens Evangelical Righteousnes, *may be blessed with such a degree of Angelical Holiness, as to raise their Divine affections towards God so high, as to delight in Him, above all the glories of this World; and fix such a conversation in Heaven, as to be humbly assured of a joyful Resurrection to Glory,* with Christ and his departed Saints; which is felicity enough to set mens ambitious hearts on cleansing, and purifying here, that they may become capable of so great honour and Eternal joy, as to have Angels places in Heaven when they die.

CC.

THough the Divine Mysteries of Heaven, and the Joys there, be Gods secrets, undiscernible by us; yet we are allowed to think that all things there, must be far more excellent then our highest fancies can reach; *and yet by the sanctified operations of the Holy Ghost,*

which

which we find in our own Souls, when inflamed with elevated zeal to God in our ſincere Addreſſes, and when our hearts are engaged in Meditations above what any words can expreſs; it is evident that thoſe Seraphick joys, which are reſerved until we ſee God face to face, muſt needs be infinitely more raviſhing delightful, then what is revealed unto fleſh and bloud; ſo that it is no wonder if ſome men (who do believe this) do retire from the diverting affairs of this World, *to entertain their Souls with ſuch contemplations of Heaven, as may bring them unto a more frequent, and nearer converſation with God, when they have ſuch a taſte of thoſe joys in Heaven, as no other man can gueſs at, unleſs by the ſame Light led!* And then, ſuch Meditations will be of great uſe, to prepare ſuch men for a chearful departure out of this World for ever; which nothing can ſo well do, *as an inward aſſurance from above*, that they ſhall go to a better place for ever, and to better company for ever; and happy is that man, whoſe Soul is feaſted here, with the thoughts of the joys in Heaven.

CCI.

CCI.

OUr Time is the greateſt Treaſure that we have; which we may call one way, well ſpent, when we give it, with our ſelves, to attend on Gods Vicegerents here on Earth; by his appointment to ſerve his Princes, and Himſelf together; and ſo may live eminent examples of virtue, and die with the credit of our time well ſpent, to ſhew others that Piety may grow in Courts, and proſper there.

Though it ſometimes happens, that ſome men fail, and that ſome mens moſt lawful acquiſitions by honeſt induſtry obtained, may be torn from them by Envy, and undue means, who may alſo undergo ſuch ſevere cenſures as they deſerve not, from the miſguided tongues of malicious men, who ſee not the true cauſe of every Ruine, which often does proceed from Gods Juſtice for ſome concealed paſt ſins, to puniſh us by ſuch means, for ſuch crimes as we have hid from men, but cannot hide from Him.

So that we may charge our puniſhment for ſin, on the perverſe nature of our

our own improvident ſelves, who do neglect the Redeeming of our miſ-ſpent time while we may, and by Repentance obtain Gods pardon, on which depends our preſent happineſs, with our future Eternal Bliſs, or Eternal Woe, not enough thought on, to make us Redeem our time, in time.

And hereon we may with ſhame conſider of, and gueſs at, what the fallen Angels would give, if they had whole Worlds to diſpoſe of; what would they not do! how many thouſand years with joy ſuffer the Torments they are in, to have the time (we value not) allowed them, to be admitted unto a poſſibility of repentance, and pardon, by Redeeming their miſ-ſpent time, of their Rebellion in Heaven, before they fell from thence to Hell.

While we careleſs men, do pamper our vitious frailties, ſo as never to value the time we have, until it be gone beyond recall, until the deſpairing terrors of a Death-bed ſtate do let us ſee that God in Juſtice gives us over unto perdition, becauſe we would not Redeem our miſ-ſpent time, and ſeek His Mercy, before the Evil day overtakes us; which

we

we all know is every moment haſting on, ready to ſwallow us up into everlaſting flames. But to ſuch men as the terrors of Hell cannot fright, nor the joys of Heaven invite to Redeem their time, in time, nothing more can be ſaid, but *Lord have mercy on them*, who will not have mercy on themſelves; for no miſery can be greater, then when miſerable men will not commiſerate their own miſery; but will hope from a Death-bed, to jump up into Heaven at once: But they will find the aſcent too high, too ſteep, and too hard for thoſe to climb up in ſuch haſt, who never learnt to know the right way thither.

CCII.

When a Soul is in fervent conference with God, about its Eternity, the Holy Ghoſt will be working that Soul up to ſee that Eternity, gives an addition of joy, to the joys in Heaven, and thoſe joys do alſo increaſe the Glory of Eternity; all which Eternity, Joy, and Glory there, Chriſt has purchaſed for penitent ſinners become Regenerate, and reconciled unto God, by Faith in his Bloud; and as our pro-

proportions of Faith do increaſe, our deſires will increaſe to be with God; as often as we dare remember that we muſt die, and are every moment dying.

Although we cannot attain to be inſpired Prophets like *David*, nor reach the firſt Rank of Saints with St. *Paul*, we may become Penitents, and Divine Lovers in ſome degree like them; though not to ſhine ſo eminently on Earth as they did, yet we may follow their ſteps here, ſo as to ſhare in the ſame Glory with them at the Reſurrection, when converted reconciled ſinners are invited to the ſame Eternal happineſs, as the departed Saints enjoy there. And what can be more wiſh'd for to encourage us to live piouſly, and die chearfully, then to be with God in Glory?

CCIII.

WE *ſhould avoid many great crimes, if we could diſcern the deformity of ſins*, through the Devils gay Curtains always drawn cloſe to hide them, until Death diſplays them in their true colours; which then will fright us into deſpair, at the ſight of ſuch griſly Aſpects,

as

as we ſo joyfully embraced for prime felicities. But if we can learn the pious skill to draw ſuch Curtains timely, thoſe Fiends behind them will vaniſh on a full view, not able to endure the Teſt of ſuch a diſcovery.

CCIV.

Did we believe Heaven to be, what Heaven is, we could not prefer this World before it; and if we did love God better then his Creatures, we ſhould not forſake Him ſo often as we do, for them; and if we did think of Eternity as we ought, we ſhould grudge every moment that diverts our hearts on trifles, when every minute may be our laſt here, and the next may crown us with Eternal Glory. *So that we ſhould ſet our hearts to raiſe our thoughts on frequent, and full conſiderations of our Death-beds*, and think ſeriouſly how the terrors of unrepented ſins will bite then; *and what a joyful paſſage our Souls will have, if reconciled before!* and then we ſhould need no other Arguments then ſuch thoughts, to perſwade us to live ſo Righteouſly, as to be ever ready on the ſhorteſt ſummons, to ſtep into that Eternity of Bliſs.

CCV.

CCV.

IT is ſaid in Scripture, *that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God*; which is a ſure foundation to raiſe high ſtructures on, *by which we may climb to Heaven, in a conſtant converſation with our great Maker, in moſt delightful Addreſſes*; for if we can by frequent practice, *follow this Divine-guiding Light*, we ſhall learn that Celeſtial Road ſo perfectly, that we may travel day and night ſafely, without miſtaking of our way, or failing of our happy Reſt at our Journeys end; which we ſhall more then gueſs at here, *by the preſent joy we find in our way thither*. And if we obſerve our ſleeps alſo, our very Dreams will entertain our Souls with pleaſure, above the reach of any waking fancies; *and by all this, we ſhall certainly find ſomething from above, that will beget a conſolation in a purified heart, to teſtifie that it is Gods work within us*, who mocks no mans ſincere ardent deſires, with falſe hopes of a felicity he ſhall not find, for by a righteous life, and lively Faith, *His improved Grace* will bring our natural frailties to

die ſo chearfully, that we ſhall leave no pleaſures behind us, ſo great, in this World, as we ſhall have by going out of it to Him.

CCVI.

A Dream of Heaven.

THough ſleep Deaths Image be, I have been now
I know not where, convey'd I know not how!
Where ſomething did appear ſo dazling bright,
I could not ſee its Glory, for the Light:
My Soul ſurpriz'd with wonder, and amaze,
Methought I pray'd, and did forbear to gaze:
Frighted, and pleas'd, at what I lik'd, and fear'd,
I found it was a Dream of Heav'n appear'd,
Which waking fled; but did my fancy fill
With bleſs'd Idea's, which abide there ſtill:
With ſuch tranſporting joy, that I can weep
To think of what I had, and could not keep:

CCVII.

HE that would improve the pleaſure of Piety, is to conſider how his Body does every moment deſcend towards the Grave; which will invite him to excite his Soul to mount much faſter towards Heaven, by ſuch a continual devout conteſt, which ſhall move faſteſt, *that he will grow to ſuch a delightful zeal to God, that every ſtep as he aſcends, will raiſe his holy ambition higher and higher, with joy on joy*, until his laſt puff of breath conveys his Soul into God's Eternal Glory; and all the way thither, will teach him to tread on the Thorns and Thiſtles of this World, as if he walked on Roſes and Lillies, through the joyful expectation of his felicity at laſt.

CCVIII.

A Divine Author ſays, That every man ought to be of ſome calling, that he may be of ſome uſe unto the State where God has made his ſtation; for he that will be good for nothing in this World, is as nothing, and ſhall be

nothing in the next; he is but as an Excrement on Earth, none of Gods uſeful Creatures; ſo that to be of a lawful calling, and diligent in it, may expect a bleſſing from Heaven on his honeſt endeavours. And Princes whoſe calling is of a general concern, are ſet on Pyramids, that all the World may ſee and imitate their Virtues; Judges muſt be vigilant in doing Juſtice; great Commanders at Sea and Land, muſt be prudently, not raſhly valiant; the Workman muſt work; the Courtier muſt wait; the Merchant muſt travel; the Preacher muſt teach; and the greateſt Reprobate (if he becomes Regenerate!) has a great calling alſo; for he ought to declare his converſion, by his future life and converſation, that his Devotion may be more eminent then his Crimes were; ſo to manifeſt Gods mercy to himſelf, and by his example to ſhew others the way to Heaven: *So that no man ſhould hide his Talent*, that can by any honeſt means improve it for the good of others. The Hypocrite is the only unhappy man this way, who will himſelf periſh, though he do good by encouraging others to Piety by his example, who cannot diſcern the

Hypo-

Hypocrites counterfeit zeal, that travels through the Church of God, as his neareſt way to Hell.

CCIX.

WHen we have repented our ſins, and forſaken them, and received the Holy Sacrament, (which is the Seal of our Reconciliation) we are not to fright our ſelves with the memory of our forgotten crimes, but muſt expreſs our gratitude, by recollecting and acknowledging the evils we have done, with the higheſt aggravation that we can; ſo to magnifie the free mercy of God, with Chriſts merits, for pardoning ſuch great crimes; and then to comfort our hearts with the Goſpel-conſolations thereon. *So that no man ought to deſpair of a place in Heaven, that does ſincerely endeavour to get in, when the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, are ſo active to bring us thither*; and yet we find it a very hard Leſſon to learn to die chearfully, when the practice of our whole lives can ſeldom teach us in ſeventy years to be perfect in it when we die.

CCX.

LEt us not lament the long time we lye in Duſt before the day of Judgment; for thoſe who died ſix thouſand years ſince, and we that die now, with them that die a thouſand years after us, ſhall all awake the ſame moment at the Reſurrection; and all this time ſhall be but as one moment divided amongſt us all; for death, and ſleep, diſtinguiſhes no time until we awake from both. So that we may reckon, that we ſhall be in *Abraham's* Boſom the moment we expire, though we ſhall not know what is meant by *Abraham's* Boſom, until we, with the departed Saints, ariſe from thence together.

CCXI.

HE that conſiders what Evils he has done, with all the aggravations belonging to ſuch crimes, muſt needs be terror-ſtruck at his hour of death, to think what great puniſhments are due to ſuch innumerable offences ſo often repeated, if not reconciled unto God before

fore that time; (but if ſo bleſs'd) what comforts will that black Soul find! when by true Repentance, and Faith, he is waſhed white as Snow, by Chriſts Bloud in the Sacrament; and purified into *Adams* firſt Innocence, and ſo be thus metamorphoſed from a Devil, into an Adopted Son of God, *by a bleſſed union with Chriſt, and filled with ſuch ſerene joys as are beyond expreſſion*; and yet our frailties are ſuch, that when we know this, and can do thus, we are ſtill ſo ſubject unto Relapſes, that we cannot ſtand in this happy ſtation, *a minute longer then by Gods Grace ſupported*; to let us ſee, that we muſt not depend on our own Righteouſneſs, but are to pray continually for Chriſts Righteouſneſs to bring us to Heaven.

CCXII.

CHriſt ſaid, *I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you*; he alſo ſaid, *that if you ask any thing in my Name, I will do it*; theſe are two ſhort Leſſons of mighty conſequence, *for what can man deſire more then to be in God?* and what can we wiſh for more, then to have what

we

we ask? and what can ſinful man ask more, then forgiveneſs of all paſt ſins, *and Grace to ſin no more? by Chriſt ſonding the Holy Ghoſt to ſanctifie us, and to dwell with us for ever, and ſo to conduct us into Heaven when we die.*

CCXIII.

WE ought to think often, and to rejoyce as often as we think, *that the Holy Ghoſt is never abſent from them that ſincerely deſire Him, and do give Him a warm welcom into a chearful heart; and he that can afford this Holy Spirit a full poſſeſſion at his reception, may keep him ever there, and will always find that He is with him, by the operation of his Grace where He inhabits, ſtill exciting him to love and delight in the Law of God, and impowering him by his Divine-guiding Light,* to live after the Law of Righteouſneſs, which will bring him to ſuch a *union with Chriſt here,* as will aſſure his Eternal Reſt with God in Glory at the Reſurrection.

CCXIV.

CCXIV.

THough a lazie idle retired life, be not according to the Christian Rule, that says, no man is born only for himself, but is bound to imploy his Talent given to him, for Gods Glory, and the good of others; yet some men who have spent many years in the busie affairs of this World, with honest industry in their callings, may without a crime retire in their old Age, from the noise and hurry of business, and also quit those gaieties, which they find through a long custom, that their frailty cannot totally resist their participation of; and on that account may retire from such diversions as do disturb the full consideration, and preparation for their Eternal Being in the next World. By which retiring also, they may teach others to become *so Regenerate, as to find more felicity in private contemplations of Heaven,* then in all Earthly fruitions; which those that live in continual crouds, can hardly find time for.

CCXV.

CCXV.

IT is great Piety for a man in health, to live ever ready to die; but it is another kind of ſtory, for a dying man to rejoyce that his hour is come to go to God, and to quit his ſhare in all the glories of this World. So that we are often to contemplate this great point of Religion, and to practice on Deaths Image (ſleep) every night when we lye down to Reſt, that we may learn to compleat our preparation for that mighty work of dying chearfully, which is ſo much diſcours'd of, and ſo ſeldom ſeen, though our laſt Pangs do frequently ſeem to comply with what we cannot hinder; and nothing can more conduce to cure this natural frailty, *then ſetting our hearts to love the Law of God*, and to ſhew it by word and deed, *and holding a conſtant converſation with our Creator*, in the daily raiſing of our Faith, and our affection to our Reſurrection from Deaths Dominion, unto His everlaſting Bliſs in Heaven.

CCXVI.

CCXVI.

THere is no felicity in this World, without a contented mind; *and there can be no full contentment, without ſuch a fixed dependance on God, as to be pleas'd with whatever He appoints, as beſt for us.* Which Divine contentment, will raiſe our hearts to ſuch a gratitude to God, *with ſuch a converſation in Heaven,* as will beget an holy courage to contemn all the croſſes, and all the allurements this World can afford; *and this Spiritual contentment we ought to cheriſh, as Gods great favour, for us to delight in while we live,* and to truſt in when we die, as a mark of our Election; thus to divert us from longing after the periſhing Glories of this World, that never can aſſure us any laſting contentment by their enjoyment, nor any comfort when we expire.

CCXVII.

HE that writes Devotion, walks on a narrow Plank with Precipices on either ſide, and is in danger to ſlip into the

the Gulf of Spiritual Pride on his own Righteouſneſs, or elſe in too much humility for his own unworthineſs, may preſume to think, that ſome things from the Holy Ghoſt informs him with Evangelical Rapſodies, when his Soul ſoars ſo high towards Heaven. So that in our beſt Actions, we are with humble and grateful hearts, to give the honour and the glory unto God, for all that we do well.

CCXVIII.

TO love God, and to be beloved of God, is an immenſe Meditation; which by practice, muſt needs improve our Intereſt in Heaven: for when God ſees our Souls ſet to ſeek him this way, He will ſend his Holy Spirit to raiſe our ambitions higher and higher, to gain his favour, in hope of ſuch an union with Chriſt, as our nature is capable of; by which ſuch elevated enlightned hearts will find a felicity on Earth, that no mans thoughts can gueſs at, that does not feel it, with a joyful aſſurance of being received into Heaven when he dies; ſo that we cannot have a better Argument to invite us to live Piouſly, and to die chearfully,

fully, then to love God thus; for the true joy of a good Soul in this World, is the very joy of Heaven, which Death ſhall not take away, nor interrupt it one moment.

CCXIX.

WE may do well to obſerve *Davids* method in his Victory over his ſins, when they were his declared Enemies: He did not retire from his charge and calling, to hide himſelf from their aſſaulting temptations, but forced them to fly from him; and purſued them ſo, as they might never be able to return upon him. And having thus vanquiſhed, and diſcarded all thoſe his old Companions, when he perceived them to be his Enemies; He ſoon became a man after Gods own heart, and then found that he had ſtrength, company, power, joy, wealth, and honour enough in God alone, with whom he ſpent the moſt of his time after, in Prayers and in Praiſes. So that as He did, we ſhould diſcard our old evil habits, and all our old Companions, (workers of Iniquity) and make them fly from us, as *David* did, and then we ſhall find all

those joys in our converſation with God, which *David* had.

CCXX.

David ſays, that *God heard the voice of his weeping*; which ſhews that the ſighs and tears of penitent ſinners, are heard in Heaven without words, and that devout tears which cannot ſpeak, do ſpeak aloud in Gods ears; nay, when we deſire to weep, but cannot pour out tears themſelves, (Doctor *Dunne* ſays) that God ſees tears in the hearts of men, before they blubber on their faces; and He is ſaid to hear the tears of a ſorrowful Soul, which for ſorrow cannot ſhed a tear; the very lifting up our Eyes to God, in a ſincere ſorrow, opens Him windows, through which He ſees a wet heart through the drieſt Eyes; and by his returns of Grace, gives comforts, with the bleſſed peace of a quiet conſcience, to aſſure our Reconciliation unto Him; that we may with chearful hearts expect Deaths ſummons unto our Eternal Reſt in Heaven.

CCXXI.

CCXXI.

THe ſupine *Epicure*, the practical Atheiſt, and the divine Hypocrite have gained ſo great a Vogue in ſome parts of the World, as hath almoſt worn true Chriſtian Religion out of Faſhion, and out of Countenance too; while thoſe are thought ill-bred men that practice any Piety; and none ſo well accompliſh'd as they who have thoſe three eminent Vertues in moſt perfection, which do very often dwell together in ſuch careleſs Hearts, as do not at all conſider, or not enough examine their integrity towards God.

CCXXII.

WE do generally wonder at, and pity the Melancholy Lives of ſome devout Hermits, who are retir'd into deſolate Habitations from the converſe of Men: But do not conſider the bleſſed contentment which their Souls enjoy in a converſation with God, as if themſelves were then in Heaven; with ſuch an ambitious Zeal, as fills their Hearts

Hearts with Happineſs, and holds up their Souls ſo fixed on Chriſt, as to deſpiſe all the Glories of this World. So that we ought not to pity thoſe happy men, but to look on them as Divine Objects, fit for our devout Envy and immitation, who do enjoy felicities above the reach of Earthly minds to judge of. But yet every pious man, that can give his whole Heart to God, needs not give his whole time too (for we are required to ſerve God more waies than one,) and may convert our Cloſets into Cells, where we may be ſure to find God as often as we deſire to meet him there; as well as on the tops of Rocks, who will not be confin'd to time, or place, that is ever with us every where. So that the Mountain Hermit, and the City Hermit, may have Spiritual entertainments, and comforts alike, while they Live, and may Die with as high delight to be with God; and may ſhine equally as bright in Heaven, when they meet there.

CCXX.

CCXXI.

LEt us redeem the time we have misſpent, while we have time to do it, by making ready for our ſummons to the Grave, as our prime buſineſs here; and when God ſees our hearts are fully fixed on Him, He will guide and conduct us through the dark rugged paths of Death, by the bright conſolations of his Holy Spirit, to entertain us with comfort and delight, in our paſſage unto His Eternal Reſt. Let us then ſet our Souls joy on this great work, and obſerve how Gods Grace, and our felicity does increaſe together, upon the remiſſion of all our ſins, and Reconciliation to God.

CCXXII.

AN habitual ſinner that perſeveres in his wickedneſs unto the end of his days, ſeems to think that his Baptiſmal Vow was to ſerve the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, and to forſake God and all his Commandments.

CCXXIII.

IT is not to be thought that any man can die chearfully, that does not believe he is then going to God; and no man can believe that he is then going to God, but he that loves God, and fears to offend Him: ſo that he only can be truly happy here, who can ſo fix his heart on God, as to find that his higheſt Happineſs in this World, is in preparing to go out of it; but moſt men in health, are too apt to think themſelves ever ready to die, and do not find that they are not, until the Bell tolls them to their Grave.

CCXXIV.

IF there be one ſin more predominant then all the reſt, that by its frequent Victories over thy frail Nature, is now grown too ſtrong for thy controul; ſtand always on thy Guard hereafter, to watch its firſt Aſſault, and be ſo well Arm'd againſt ſurprizes, as to have time to call in Aid from Heaven, to aſſiſt when ſuch an Uſurping Enemy appears, as thy own ſtrength cannot reſiſt: But let not thy new

new courage fail, fight bravely on to thy laſt gaſp, and rather die then yield; never ſubmit, never comply with ſuch a known Enemy; for when it cannot compell thee to conſent, as formerly, 'twill quit the Field, aſham'd to be ſo baffled by its Slave, ſo frequently ſubdued before. And thus by a ſtout reſiſtance, thou wilt find inward unſeen Aids, to humble that Triumphant ſin, that has ſo often Tyrannized over thee.

CCXXV.

TO die, while we are dying, is not ſtrange;
But to be ſo unwilling to exchange
Our anxious days, in a diſtracted time,
For an Eternal Reſt, and joy ſublime,
Is want of Faith, or value for our God,
To ſhun his preſence, and embrace his Rod:
Pretend to Heav'n, but ſtill do from it fly,
Becauſe we will not, dare not learn to dye;
Though we can only when our Souls expire,
Obtain long life, which we ſo much deſire.
Could we divide a moment to the Eye,
We ſhould ſee Life, the moment that we dye;
And Faith does fully that defect ſupply,
For though my Body dies, it is not I.

CCXXVI.

CCXXVI.

POSTSCRIPT.

THe conceal'd Author, doubting that he may be too ſoon known, does think fit to make ſome Apology for expoſing ſo many looſe Lines unto the cenſure of the World; and does only hope, that all good men will in charity look on his *Mid-night Thoughts*, as rough Oar found in a rich Golden Mine, from which they may waſh away the Soil, and lay up the pure Gold for uſe.

FINIS.

CCXXVII.

NO man can gues at the felicity of holy-Meditations but those who constantly converse with God that way; and who have obtained grace to be admired at all times to such near aproaches, that their souls seem to be entertained amongst the Angels in Gods presence, while those Divine Addresses last; by which God also seems to manifest his Mercy unto the souls of men, in shewing them some glimps of that Eternal glory they shall share in at the Resurrection; to fill our hearts with blessed Ideas of his Celestial Joyes.

CCXXVIII.

HE that would know true joy on Earth must secure his Eternal Bliss unto his own heart; not only by confessing, bewailing, and forsaking his known sins in hope of pardon; but must express his Love to God, and his gratitude for that pardon; with a true value of it, by improving his peace of conscience thereon with a Continual Conversation in Heaven for the future; and thereby raising his soul to such a delight-

ful Love of God, as to find that the prime entertainment of his heart, is to be so retired with his Creator and Redeemer, that he may observe how the Holy-Ghost is ever present with them to improve his delight in them, unto as high joy as man is capable off on this side of Heaven: And whoever can obtain grace, thus to make his Devotion his prime pleasure on Earth, will perceive a new kind of felicity, by such an exaltation in his soul as will raise his affection to God above all other Divisions. And then, if such Meditations do shew him such a prospect of his Eternal Bliss, as doth create a Faithful expectation of Heaven so delightful here; He may presume that he shall not want Divine Valour to die cheerfully, when he is called to take possession of that glorious purchase which Christ had made for him there.

CCXIX.

IT is worthy of observation, and our most serious Meditations, to see how much all men of all humors, and all conditions, Young and Old, are generally of one mind in our great Journey through this world; Where we are humbled to-

ge-

gether, and tossed, and tumbled in rough rugged ways up and down steep Hills, full of hopes and fears, still entertained with more storms than shinshine, and never free from such dangers, as do fill most mens hearts with unquiet thoughts through their own Journey; though some good men well Armed, can smile, and sleep it out with patience, while others sighing, groan and weep the whole way through: And too many there be in this great *Caravan*, who Laugh and sing, and merrily pass their whole time without a thought of whether they are going, until their turn comes to be tumbled out into the Pit, with as little regard as they went thither. But almost all, are all the way of the same mind, to Linger on in their uneasie passage, rather than once heartily to wish to see their Journeys end; and very few there are, that do entertain any joyful thoughts of their arrival there at Last; So that till Time by Day and Night, of course transports them thither; though tied and Cripled by various hardships in their long travels, very many do wish they might return the rugged way they came; to endure a-

nother age of ſorrows, pains, and troubles, rather than to alight from their Woren-out Waggons, to reſt a while in their own Homes, though they know there is no other way to paſs unto Eternal Bliſs. But when they find the wheels, and Axel-trees that bore them up, do crack under their heavy burdens, paſt all hope to carry them any longer on; then to late, they flatter themſelves with vain hopes to flatter God, as if they did deſire to be with Him; When they do know that God doth ſee, that nothing could by them be done, to keep them longer from Him. For which great frailty in Mankind, the only ſure cure is, to think of, and prepare for our journeys End, all the way we travel thither; And then the expectation of that joy, and that Glory we march towards, will ſweeten all we ſuffer on our way to God. And happy are thoſe men, that can obtain grace to travel ſo to Heaven, as to get ſuch a taſt of thoſe Celeſtial joys in their way thither, as will make their hearts glad to think they ſhall Arrive, where they are to Reſt for ever in peace, and Glory.

CCXXX.

CCXXX.

IF we believe Charity to be a prime Christian Duty; to relieve the Poor by our purses, and by our good councel, and vertuous lives, to reform sinners, How great an offence is it! for Christians to oppress their Neighbors, by unjust power, and to seduce others unto evil actions, or to defame, and scandalize the most Innocent on any design, or for envy; and in general to be more eminently wicked than Heathens; as if we strove in emulation to out-do the Devil in Malice and rapine, to shew how we can defye all Christian principles, that should lead us unto our salvation.

CCXXXI.

HE who truly loves, desires to be much with his beloved; and if God be that object of his hearts delight, he will desire to be ever with him, and may assuredly have what he so desires, by raising his soul in frequent Meditations unto the Divine Presence, where God will sometimes admit of his transported

ported elevated affection in prayer, to some degree of his Celestial Bliss; and will sometimes send down his Holy Spirit, to sanctify his heart with such growing comforts there, as will consecrate that to be his Temple, where he will abide so long as he finds a sincere welcome, with a total resignation unto Him. And this Divine felicity, this pre-possession of Heaven, this holy conversation with God; will invite such a man unto continual ambitious endeavors to get nearer, and nearer with delight, towards his entering into the eternal joy of his beloved. And by such a dayly practice, he will find his heart so fill'd with grace, and so Armed with Holy courage, as to be always ready to die Cheerfully; which is our only way to shew our love, and our desire to be with God. And is the chief business that we were born for; and when rightly understood, is the supremest pleasure we can have on Earth, in our way to heaven, to be ever so ready for our summons thither, that no crosses, losses, or afflictions in this world, nor all the glories therein, shall be able to give us any interruption in our journey thither.

CCXXXII.

IT may sometimes be useful in our Meditations, to compare small concerns with greater, and so to set our frequent troubles opposite unto our delights in this world; and then to Judge ingeniously between them; and if our joyes do weigh down the scales; then to re-weigh those joyes below, with the joy and glory above; that when we are most Laden with wealth and honors, most elevated with the smiles and favours of great Princes here; then to raise our souls unto a holy emulation with the Saints in Heaven, for Gods favor there; as our supream felicity, which will creat such a purity of heart within us, as will be more constantly delightful, than all this world can give us; And by such a Resurrection from earthly pleasures, to long after the next worlds everlasting joys, will fix our affections on that eternal Bliss, with a Divine transporting joy, to foresee that glory we shall find, the moment we expire.

CCXXXIII.

CCXXXIII.

A Regenerate Mans frequent devout Meditations, do raiſe in him a delight to converſe ſo with God, and doth increaſe that delight, unto the moſt immenſe joys, that the ſoul of man can reach on earth. It is like the adding of Ciphers to a former ſumm payable from a Banck of treaſure that can never be exhauſted; but the more we multiply that ſcore, the more we may; and the greater our account grows this way, the ſurer will our payment be; by faſt linking our earthly joyes, unto the everlaſting chain of Joys in Heaven.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 9. l. 12. r. *will so fill it*, p. 10. l. 17. induced r. *endued*, p. 14. l. 9. then r. *there*, p. 25. l. 9. mark r. *work*, p. 26. l. 12. times r. *Aims*, p. 47. l. 8. concealed r. *cancelled*, p. 49. l. 11. r. *without*. p. 150. l. 13. r. *despair*, p. 151. l. 19. of r. *our*, p. 155. l. 7. r. *marks they wear*.